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ABSTRACT

This collection of lessons was developed by teachers in an institute focusing on teaching about India and the Ramayana. Essays providing background information are "The Oral Tradition and the Many 'Ramayanas'" (Philip Lutgendorf) and "Bringing Ramayana into the Classroom" (Hazel Sara Greenberg). After an introduction by Susan Wadley, a Ramayana glossary, a piece called "The Ramayana! A 'Telling' of the Ancient Indian Epic," and maps of India, the sections include: (1) "How is Ramayana Part of the Great Storytelling Tradition?"; (2) "To What Extent Does Ramayana Introduce India and Its Culture?"; (3) "To What Degree Does Ramayana Help Us Comprehend Hindu Values and Religion?"; (4) "How Can Ramayana Help Us Gain an Understanding of Hindu Rituals?"; and (5) "How Does Ramayana Reflect Change Over Time and Space?" There are 25 units with lessons throughout the five sections. A glossary and maps accompany the lessons. (EH)

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# Spotlight on Ramayana

## An Enduring Tradition

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## Spotlight on

# Ramayana

## An Enduring Tradition

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# Table of Contents

Program Participants . . . . . iv
The Oral Tradition and the Many "Ramayanas" Philip Lutgendorf . . . . . v
Bringing Ramayana into the Classroom Hazel Sara Greenberg . . . . . vii
Introduction Susan Wadley . . . . . viii
Ramayana Glossary . . . . . xi
The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic . . . . . xii
Maps of India . . . . . xxvii

I. How is Ramayana Part of the Great Storytelling Tradition?

UNIT 1, lessons 1-6 . . . . . 31
UNIT 2, lessons 1-9 . . . . . 61
UNIT 3, lessons 1-4 . . . . . 84
UNIT 4, lesson 1 . . . . . 93

II. To What Extent Does Ramayana Introduce India and its Culture?

UNIT 5, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 101
UNIT 6, lesson 1 . . . . . 111
UNIT 7, lesson 1 . . . . . 126

III. To What Degree Does Ramayana Help us Comprehend Hindu Values and Religion?

UNIT 8, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 131
UNIT 9, lesson 1 . . . . . 161
UNIT 10, lesson 1 . . . . . 165
UNIT 11, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 172
UNIT 12, lesson 1 . . . . . 178

IV. How can Ramayana Help Us Gain an Understanding of Hindu Rituals?

UNIT 13, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 185
UNIT 14, lessons 1-4 . . . . . 193
UNIT 15, lesson 1 . . . . . 209
UNIT 16, lesson 1 . . . . . 215
UNIT 17, lesson 1 . . . . . 220
UNIT 18, lesson 1 . . . . . 232

V. How Does Ramayana Reflect Change Over Time and Space?

UNIT 19, lesson 1 . . . . . 241
UNIT 20, lessons 1-3 . . . . . 245
UNIT 21, lesson 1 . . . . . 288
UNIT 22, lessons 1-4 . . . . . 299
UNIT 23, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 318
UNIT 24, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 323
UNIT 25, lessons 1-2 . . . . . 331

Appendix . . . . . 339
*Spotlight on Ramayana* Video . . . . . 341
*Ramayana* Teacher Resources . . . . . 345

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# The Oral Tradition and the Many "Ramayanas"

by Philip Lutgendorf, Chair, South Asian Studies Program, University of Iowa

नाना भाँति राम अवतारा । रामायन सत कोटि अपारा ॥

*Rama is born in countless ways, and*
*there are tens of millions of Ramayanas...*

- Tulsidas (16th cent.) *Ramcarittnanas 1:33:6*

All right (you may be asking at this point), just how many of these things are there, anyway? The title of this curriculum guide speaks reassuringly of "The *Ramayana*" but later subheadings suggest a kind of textual population explosion, speaking of "many," "a thousand," and finally, "tens of millions." Is this just epic hyperbole, like the myriads of arrows that shoot forth whenever the hero Rama releases his bow? And if not, how are American educators and students supposed to get a handle on a non-Western text and tradition that is (as they say) growing even as we speak?

I've been teaching the *Ramayana* for years, and (like most of the contributors to this guide) have found that it serves as an excellent window through which to open to American students great vistas of the world of Indian civilization. But I always begin by explaining that "the *Ramayana*" (in spite of the definitive article) is ***not*** a single book like "the Bible" but rather a story and a tradition of storytelling. For more than two millennia, this tradition has enjoyed a unique popularity throughout the subcontinent of South Asia (comprising the modern states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) and beyond - for versions of the tale have flourished in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Although the core story of the travails of Prince Rama and Princess Sita and their companions remains much the same everywhere, storytellers and poets in dozens of languages have chosen not simply to translate some "original" version, but instead have retold the saga in their own words, often modifying and embellishing it according to regional traditions or their own insights and interpretations. At the same time, this tale has been continuously recreated orally - with all the fluidity we expect in oral performance - by a whole spectrum of tellers ranging from traditional bards and singers to modern film and video producers (an epic television serialization of the story held Indian audiences spellbound in 1987-89), and also including countless grandmothers. Indeed, for most modern Indians, the "original" *Ramayana* is as likely to mean a bedtime story heard in childhood as the 2000+ year old Sanskrit epic of the poet-sage Valmiki.

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Since the *Ramayana* is a story, and a charming one at that, students find it relatively easy to get into - even with four syllable foreign names. Like contemporary fantasy fiction and video-gaming, it ushers them into a world of superhuman heroes and hyperbolic deeds, within which a strangely-familiar scenario unfolds: a handsome prince wins a beautiful princess for his bride, but is deprived of his kingdom by a scheming step-mother and unjustly exiled to the forest, where a wizard-king abducts the prince's wife and imprisons her in a golden island-fortress. The prince then sets out on a daring quest to recover his beloved, aided by talking animals and birds, and ultimately triumphs over his adversary (a villain so egotistical he has sprouted ten heads!) in a cataclysmic battle, to return in triumph and reclaim his throne. This skeletal outline resembles many European folktales, but as students are drawn deeper into the details of its epic plot, they encounter much that is unfamiliar, for the *Ramayana* encodes many of the cultural values of Hindu civilization: from a cosmology of cyclically-recurring eons, to a stratified social order and a patriarchical, extended-family structure based on arranged marriage, to the overarching theme of *Dharma-a* central cultural concept suggested by terms like "morality," "duty," "cosmic order," or simply, "the Way." Thus the story can open a portal leading students to encounter with the world-view of a great civilization that both resembles, and markedly differs from, their own and (a process, by the way, which may enable them to realize that they *have* a world view in the first place.)

The contributions in this guide - the work of educators who have come to value the *Ramayana* - are designed to help other teachers to facilitate such a cultural encounter by helping them to read "between the lines" of the **epic** story and to recognize some of the ethical and social values it encodes and the issues it raises. This last point is important, because as a fluid storytelling tradition, the *Ramayana* doesn't simply provide set answers. It also raises troubling questions that have been pondered and debated by audiences for centuries, and that have resulted, in some cases, in radical reinterpretations of characters and events, or in the creation of such "alternative" retellings as those that give greater prominence to women or that even cast the "villains" as the real such heroes. In this way, it has functioned less as a fixed message than as a kind of language within which South Asian culture thinks about itself, and projects (and argues about) its ideals of the good life and the just society. Since one out of every seven people on earth today lives on the Indian subcontinent, there are literally "tens of millions" of *Ramayanas* out there - and still others "over here" as well, brought by a prosperous and culturally vibrant group of recent immigrants. Through studying the *Ramayana* story, you and your students will learn something important about the myriad bearers of this tale, and hopefully about yourselves.

## Bringing Ramayana into the Classroom

Hazel Sara Greenberg, Director of Curriculum, The American Forum for Global Education

The American Forum for Global Education is very excited to offer **Spotlight on Ramayana: An Enduring Tradition**. We believe this is an excellent guide to help educators and students increase their understanding of India. We have used the ancient Indian epic, *Ramayana*, as a vehicle for a study of the subcontinent. Through the text of the tale, we can explore the history, geography, politics and culture of India. The relationship between text and context makes this an innovative and interesting approach to India.

This project is an outgrowth of an exemplary program initially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. During the summer of 1994, thirty New York States teachers met at Syracuse University to study Ramayana under the guidance of Susan W. Wadley, Professor and Chairperson of the Anthropology Department. The purpose of the Institute was to allow these teachers four weeks to investigate *Ramayana*. The program participants represented pre-collegiate teachers of communication arts and social studies. We were interested in having these educators examine the text of the epic from multiple discipline points-of-view. Throughout the period of study, Dr. Wadley as well as outstanding visiting scholars such as Dr. Linda Hess (Univ. of California, Berkeley), Dr. Philip Lutgendorf (University of Northern Iowa), Dr. Narayan Rao (University of Wisconsin) and Dr. Samursan (Wesleyan University) provided the participants with wonderful presentations, films, slides, narratives and intellectual activities.

However, it is important for the work of a small group to have a larger impact. Each of the participants was asked to develop classroom materials which could be used by other teachers across the country. This guide is the result of their efforts. Funding was obtained from CHART, Collaboratives for Humanities and Arts Teaching. Additional funding for the accompanying video was made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

This project would never have been accomplished without the dedication of a number of people. I want to give my heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Elizabeth Mahony, truly my "keeper of papers" and "organizer of details." Liz has worked alongside me from the beginning and is truly a co-director of the project. Her final efforts in producing this guide must be applauded. Other “in-house” staff deserving special thanks include Beth Valand, graphic designer and Corina Udrea, graduate intern. Christopher Lee, a graduate student at Syracuse University was valuable during the tenure of the institute. Dr. Priti Ramamurthy, Coordinator, South Asia Outreach Center, Syracuse University, was always on hand during the summer program and has acted as consultant and editor for the curriculum guide. Major kudos must be given to Sue Wadley. She is the rare university scholar who understands the value of working with pre-collegiate teachers and students to increase their knowledge of India and make the material alive and interesting. The video was her inspiration and she developed the script and coordinated all aspects of this component, working directly with Steven Duprey, the Director of Duprey Video Productions, the producer of the video. Our collaboration has been outstanding and I continue to admire her energy and enthusiasm. Lastly, I want to thank the program participants. They were new teachers and experienced teachers; they were urban teachers and rural teachers; more than anything, they were committed to the principles of sound education for all our students.

# Introduction

Dr. Susan Wadley
Chairperson, Anthropology Department, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Once in a while we are fortunate to have a truly envigorating experience. Working on this project has been such an experience from its inception as an idea, to writing a proposal for the summer institute, to arranging housing and food for thirty teachers, to teaching and working with an exceptional group of commited teachers from across New York State, to editing this volume and learning to write video scripts. And the excitment nevers ends, as my last and most recent task was to transcibe the song that concludes the lessons in this volume, a song sung by a group of untouchables in northern India who contest the more common tellings of the Ramayana as they relate it to their daily lives and the political realities of India in the 1990s. The Ramayana is an enduring tradition precisely because it is always changing, always fluid, never quite what we expect.

Let me give one example, to whet your appetites for what follows. The Ramayana is most often portrayed as an epic which exalts in submissive females; its heroine Sita is seen as the perfect wife, always obedient to her husband Rama while undergoing exile ancl banishment, as well as tests of her chastity. Yet folk singers of the epic in South India sing of the attempted abduction of Sita by the demon Ravana in this way, challenging our preconceived assumptions about Sita, about female passivity, about the story itself.

Sita looked at Ravana
Rama had picked up hill bow,
But Sita took the bow from Rama,
She hid behind Rama and shot the arrow.
Like a mountain falling, so Ravana fell.
Like a pumpkin falling, so Ravana fell.

It is precisely this continual flux, reinterpretation, and many visions of the message of the Ramayana that make it exciting to study and to teach. All of us involved in this project hope that you and your students also find it challenging and exciting.

The lessons included here have been arranged topically, under major themes - storytelling, culture, values, rituals, change in space and time. Some are a bit repetitive, and we urge you to pick and choose amongst all the lessons for those most appropriate to your needs and goals. You might choose to create new lessons or Units out of parts of ours. Most of us had experience with Ninth graders, but these lessons can be adapted for older and younger students, up to and including college-aged.

The Units in Chapter I are most applicable to humanities and English teachers who may wish to teach the Ramayana as a supplement to social studies courses or as a unit on storytelling and epic. For example , Unit 3 compares the Ramayana with the Odyssey. The Units in Chapters II-IV are rather self-explanatory - dharma, ethics, rituals, life cycle rites. While most are concerned with issues dealt with in the social sciences, they have potential use in humanities or art classrooms. These Units are largely concerned with religious values and could be used in conjunction with other parts of your curriculum concerned with Hinduism. The Units in Chapter V are most directly concerned with modern India, with Units on contesting caste, ecology and feminism, Hindu-Muslim conflicts, and historical change. Unit 23, on geography, could be used in the initial section of a South Asia section of your course, perhaps in conjunction with Unit 20, but the others of this section are best used near the end of a South Asia segment as they demand more backgroumnd of historical and social issues.

The accompanying video is an essential supplement to the lessons, portraying the story of the Ramayana visually, as well as showing different performance styles. Other portions of it provide brief visual supplements to the lessons on ritual and geography. We have noted some of the links between lessons in Procedure sections, as well as links to *A South Asia Curriculum: Teaching About India*. Periodically, we suggest that you seek out other visual or audio aids - the various South Asia Centers (see listing in Appendix) have videos to loan, while copies of the television Ramayana made in India in the late 1980s are available in most Indian groceries. Tape cassettes of English language Indian rock and rap music, also available In dian markets, might encourage your students to see greater similarities between India and their own lives than they think possible. Finally, we have added a set of god posters of episodes from the Ramayana to use in your classrooms: these visuals should be a daily reminder of the epic story.

I would like to thank the teachers who joined us this past summer and whose lessons are given here. They are a wonderful tribute to the creativity and energy found in American education today. I must also thank Hazel Greenberg, who somehow got my name and eventually drew me into her vision of an institute focusing on the Ramayana. Priti Ramamurthy - friend, colleague and co-editor - continually challenges inappropriate 'baggage' that I may carry from my training thirty years ago, thus forcing me to read and reread, think and rethink. Chris Lee was our summer gopher, finding telephones when the apartments had none, meal tickets when they went missing, and making endless copies of endless pages of text. Liz - whose patience with change and retyping seems boundless - was a great colleague. We also had wonderful guests and many good meals.

Most of all, I must thank the hundreds of thousands of creative performers of the Ramayana over the past 2000 plus years. Only a few names remain with us, but it is the creative energy of the tellers of this epic, whether in song, prose, or dance, that have made it an "enduring tradition".

Our lessons give you many opportunities to continue the Ramayana tradition with new retellings. Last summer, we too participated in that creative retelling tradition, adapting the Ramayana to that American classic, the alphabet song, but to a rap beat and melody (never say that tradition doesn't change!). Here is our creation: perhaps you too will join the Ramayana tradition by performing it with your students.

### Ramayana Chorus Song

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

A is for Ayodhya, the kingdom which he ruled
B is for Bharata, who ruled in Rama's stead.
C is for Chitrakoot, where Rama made his home.
D is for Dasharatha, the devoted father of Ram.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

E is for Envy, with which Manthara poisoned Kaikeyi.
F is for Fire, through which Sita proved her dharma.
G is for Guhah, receiving Rama in the forest.
H is for Hanuman, discovering where Sita stayed.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

I is for Indrajit, who captured Hanuman.
J is for Janacka, who fathered lovely Sita.
K is for Kaikeyi, whose plot did banish Rama.
L is for Lakshman, who stood by Rama's side.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

M is for Manthara, who devised the wicked plot.
N is for Nala, who built the bridge to Lanka.
O is for obedience, which makes this story work.
P is for Pushpaka, the chariot of the gods.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

Q is for Queen Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Rama.
R is for Rama and Ravanna, who fought for Sita's love.
S is for Sita, the object of all contention.
T is for Tadaka, the first demon Rama slew.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

U is for Urmila, left behind for 14 years.
V is for Valmiki, whom told the story in sloka verse.
W is for War, in which the monkeys and the demons dies.
X is for example, which Rama tried to set.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

Y is for Yama, God of Death transitioning Life's cycles.
Z is for the ZZZZZ's of Kubakandha's six-month nap.

Chorus: Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram
Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana, Ramayana

x

## Ramayana Glossary *(for use with The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic)*

*Ayodhya* - Capital city of Kosala which was ruled by Dasaratha, later by Rama.
*Asoka* - Garden in Lanka where Ravana kept Sita captive.
*Avatar* - The incarnation of a god into another form. The incarnation of Vishnu on earth is Rama.
*Bharata* - Son of Queen Kaikevi and the half brother of Rama.
*Boon* - A promise or reward
*Brahma* - The creator god of the Hindu triad of gods which includes Shiva and Vishnu.
*Chitrakoot* - A beautiful forest where Rama, Sita and Lakshmana lived.
*Dandaka* - Great forest which Rama, Sita and Lakshmana traveled through for ten years of their exile.
*Dasaratha* - King of Kosala and Rama's earthy father
*Dharma* - Laws, duties and obligations
*Dushan* - Brother of Ravana and Surpurnakha.
*Ganges* - The river considered sacred by Hindus.
*Garuda* - King of winged creatures
*Godavari* - River Rama, Sita and Lakshmana crossed to get to Panchavati.
*Hanuman* - Monkey warrior who became Rama's devoted friend and servant.
*Indrajit* - Ravana's favorite son who fought Rama with magical weapons.
*Jambuvan* - Leader of the bears who found Sita.
*Janaka* - King of Mithila who found Sita in a furrow.
*Jatayu* - The great bird who tried to rescue Sita and was killed by Ravana.
*Kaikeyi* - Dasaratha's youngest queen and the mother of Bharata. She called for Rama's exile.
*Kailasa* - Mountain where Hanuman found the medicinal herbs.
*Kausalya* - Dasaratha's queen and Rama's mother.
*Khar* - Brother of Ravana and Surpurnakha.
*Kiskindha* - The monkey kingdom ruled by Sugriva.
*Kosala* - The kingdom ruled by Dasaratha.
*Kush* - Sita and Rama's son, twin of Lava.
*Lakshmana* - Queen Sumitra's son and devoted half-brother of Rama.
*Lanka* - Island kingdom ruled by Ravana
*Lava* - Sita and Rama's son, twin of Kush.
*Lotus* - Flower; Hindu symbol of beauty, purity & good fortune
*Manthara* - Maid servant who convinced Kaikeyi to have Rama exiled and make Bharata king.
*Mantra* - Hindu prayers or incantations.
*Mareech* - The magician who helped Ravana capture Sita.
*Nala* - Son of the great builder who helped Rama construct the bridge to Lanka.
*Panchavati* - Rama, Sita and Lakshmana abode in the forest.
*Payasam* - A mixture of rice pudding, milk and sugar.
*Rakshasas* - Warrior-demons.
*Ravana* - King of Lanka who kidnaped Sita and was defeated by Rama.
*Sanyasi* - A religious man who lives in a forest - a hermit.
*Sarayu* - The river that runs alongside Ayodhya.
*Sari* - A garment of yards of cloth draped to form a skirt and head or shoulder covering.
*Sat-purusa* - The ideal Hindu man.
*Shiva* - The deity whose bow Rama lifted to win Sita's hand in marriage.
*Surpanakha* - Ravana's demon sister.
*Sita* - Daughter of King Janaka, wife of Rama; name literally means *furrow*.
*Sugriva* - Monkey king of Kiskindha who helped Rama get Sita back.
*Sumantra* - Charioteer of Kosala.
*Sumitra* - One of Dasaratha's queens and mother of twin sons Shatrughna and Lakshmana.
*Tataka* - Demoness who was killed by Rama.
*Valmiki* - Poet and author of the *Ramayana* who helps Sita and her twin sons.
*Vasistha* - Priest to King Dasaratha.
*Vibhishana* - Ravana's brother who leaves Lanka to join Rama.
*Vishnu* - God who came to earth in the form of Rama to rid the world of demons.
*Vishwamitra* - Religious man; went to forest with Rama to kill the demons that were bothering him.

## The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic

*(This "telling" of the Ramayana story was adapted by Larry Tominberg for classroom use. If a teacher is unable to provide fuller copies of the text for use with the lessons in* ***Spotlight on Ramayana: An Enduring Tradition****, this version should be used.)*

### The Boyhood Of Rama

On the banks of the Sarayu River stood the beautiful city of Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala. In the city there were magnificent palaces decorated with precious stones. Spires of great temples rose above the city as if to touch the sky. For protection, the city was surrounded by a great moat. The people of Ayodhya were peace-loving and happy. No one was ignorant or poor. Everyone had faith in God and read the scriptures daily.

Each person knew his or her role in society. The brahmins devoted their lives to studying the sacred texts. The rulers and warriors governed and protected the city. The farmers and merchants fed and clothed the citizens.

Yet, all was not well in Ayodhya. Dasaratha, the king was unhappy. Although he was very old, he had no son to inherit his throne.

One day the king called upon his priest Vasistha. "Vasistha," he said. "I am growing old. I long for a son, a son who will take my place on the throne."

The priest knew all too well that his king needed to have a son. He replied, "Dasaratha, you will have sons. I shall perform a sacred rite to please the gods."

Excited by this wonderful news, the king ran to tell his three wives Sumitra, Kaikeyi, and Kausalya, "I will have sons!"

At the same moment many of the gods were growing more and more angry with Ravana, the ruler of the rakshasas, or demons. Ravana was no ordinary looking demon. He had ten heads and twenty arms. He also had remarkable powers. But he was using his power to prevent the gods and holy men from performing sacred rituals. This was a terrible insult to all who were holy.

Learning of Ravana's actions, Vishnu, the protector of the universe, decided it was time to do something. But what? Years ago Ravana was granted a boon, or promise. This boon protected him from gods and demons. How then, Vishnu wondered, could Ravana be stopped?

Vishnu thought, "Ravana, in his arrogance, protected himself only from those beings whom he thought could hurt him. He failed to protect himself from humans and monkeys."

Vishnu decided to be born as a human who could kill Ravana. The gods and holy men were pleased with his decision.

Vishnu sent a messenger to king Dasaratha with *payasam*, a sweet made of milk and rice, laced with a special potion.

The messenger said, "Give each of the three wives this drink. It is a boon that will bring sons." Then the messenger disappeared.

The king gave each of his wives part of the drink. No sooner had his wives finished, than each shone with the glow of a divine being in their womb.

There was great rejoicing in the city when four sons were born to their king. Their names were Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna.

Even as infants, everyone noticed that Rama and Lakshmana were inseparable. It was as if they were one life in two bodies.

All four sons grew to be intelligent men. They learned the holy scriptures well. They were devoted to the welfare of others. Dasaratha was finally happy.

He enjoyed watching his sons grow before his eyes. He did not say it in so many words, but he did have a special place in his heart for Rama.

One day the sage, or wise man, Vishvamitra came to Ayodhya to see the king. The king had great respect for him.

"Greetings, oh, wise one. What brings you to my kingdom?"

The sage said, "I have come to ask you a favor."

"How can I help? No wish is too great to ask," the king responded.

"It pleases me to hear those words from you, " said Vishwamitra. I have been trying to perform an important sacred rite which is again and again being interrupted by Ravana's demons. My vows prevent me personally from fighting these demons."

The king listened intently.

"I pray, Dasaratha, that you allow me to take Rama with me to protect my sacred rite."

"But Rama is only a child. He is but sixteen years of age. I have a better idea. I shall send you my armies to battle these demons. I will even accompany you. I shall fight these demons with my own hands. But please do not take Rama. Without Rama I cannot live even a few minutes."

The king began to weep.

Vishwamitra understood the king's pain. But the sage also had no choice. He knew that Rama was an *avatar*, or incarnation of Vishnu on earth. He also knew that only Vishnu in human form could kill Ravana.

The king told Rama about Vishwamitra's request. Rama understood and willingly went with the sage.

"I shall go, too, father," declared Lakshmana. The king did not protest.

Rama and Lakshmana, weapons slung over their shoulders, and followed the sage along the Sarayu River bank.

The journey was a long one. Whenever the three stopped to rest, the sage took the time to teach the boys how to use the powerful weapons of the gods to fight the demons.

They journeyed until they reached the foot of a frightening forest. They paused. The sage said, "This was once a beautiful and prosperous country. Now the terrible she-demon, Tataka, lives here. She attacks and kills anyone who enters."

Neither Rama nor Lakshmana were afraid.

The sage turned to Rama and said, "Now it is up to you to rid this forest of these demons. By doing so, you will restore the land to the prosperity and the peace it once enjoyed."

Rama clutched his bow and removed arrows from his quiver. Rama and Lakshmana followed Vishwamitra into the forest. They heard many strange and frightening sounds. Each step they took brought them deeper into the forest.

Suddenly there was an unearthly roar. The three men stopped. From nowhere a huge rock came hurling out of the sky heading straight for Rama. He slipped an arrow in place and drew his bow. He fired just as the rock was about to hit him. The arrow split the rock in two. The pieces fell harmlessly to earth.

Then appearing out of between two trees, Rama saw a horrible sight. It was the hideous form of the demoness, Tataka. She was enormous. Around her neck was a human skull. She had sharp claws on her hands. She looked at Rama and made a growling noise. Lakshmana decided to wait no longer. He fired his arrow and gravely wounded the demoness. A strange look came over her face as she felt the arrow pierce her flesh. Placing her hand to the wound she moaned, "What mortals have wounded me?" Then taking careful aim, Rama fired his arrow into Tataka's heart killing her.

No sooner had the she-demon died, than the gods in heaven rained lotus blossoms down on Rama blessing him. The three continued on their journey deeper into the forest. Along the way, Rama and Lakshmana killed many demons.

The sage told Rama: "I am delighted with you. I shall give you even greater weapons to defeat any enemy."

He knew that Rama's work was far from complete. There was still the powerful Ravana to deal with. It was one thing to kill Ravana's demons; it was another to kill Ravana himself.

The three finally left the forest. They headed for Mithila to visit King Janaka.

Seeing the sage, Janaka greeted him saying, "Have I told you about my daughter?"

"Please tell me about her," responded the sage.

The king spoke: "A few years ago a portion of my land was being plowed and I found a divine child in a furrow. I called her Sita and adopted her as my own daughter. She has grown into a beautiful, young woman. Many princes have desired her hand in marriage.

"But I wanted the man who married my Sita to be a man of great strength and righteousness. To prove his strength, this man would have to lift and string the ancient bow of Shiva. No man has shown the strength to even lift this bow."

The sage turned to Rama and said, "There is a bow belonging to King Janaka that I would like you to string."

Rama entered a long room filled with thousands of people. The bow was so heavy it took no less than five thousand exceptionally strong men to bring the bow and its casing into the room. Several princes who had tried to lift the bow looked on as Rama approached the weapon. Rama looked at Shiva's bow. First he touched it. It was beautiful. Then with no effort whatsoever, he hoisted the bow from its casing and started to string it. As he did so, the bow snapped in two and fell to the palace floor. First there was disbelief, then everyone stood and chanted, "Rama. Rama."

The king rose to his feet and declared, "Sita has found her spouse! Send a messenger to Ayodhya informing them of the wedding of Rama to my daughter, Sita."

The wedding ceremony was held in the palace. As part of this ceremony, the worship of the sacred fire began. The holiest sages recited *mantras*, prayers.

After this, King Janaka led Sita to Rama. He placed her hand in his and said to Rama, "This is Sita, my daughter, O Rama, who is from today your partner in life. Accept her. Hold her hand in yours. She will always follow you as your shadow."

Rama looked at Sita. He had never seen a more beautiful woman. Sita looked at Rama. She had never seen a more handsome man.

Following the wedding everyone returned to Ayodhya. All in the city cheered their arrival. Rama and Sita continued to serve their parents and delight the holy ones and gods. Sita and Rama were the perfect husband and wife. They were exceedingly devoted to each other.

Rama's parents watched him mature into a young prince. Rama was a perfectly perfect young man. He had all the noble qualities. He was patient with others' wrongs, but would not do wrong himself. He enjoyed the company of elders and wise men. He was very intelligent and courageous. He was righteous and kind. He was the perfect warrior. He knew when to use violence and when not to. He was healthy, strong and handsome. He was highly learned in the scriptures. Rama was a *sat-purusa*, the ideal man.

## Life In Ayodhya

Now the king was growing older. He noticed omens suggesting his end was near. "I have lived long enough," he thought. "I must be sure my throne goes to Rama, the most worthy of my sons. What a great blessing it would be to see him as king before I go to heaven.

"Then it will be done," Dasaratha concluded, "I shall step down and Rama shall be made king."

The king told everyone about his decision. He informed the priests to begin the sacred rites that would allow Rama to assume the throne of Ayodhya.

Kaikeyi, the last and youngest of the king's three wives, had heard of the decision to make Rama king while Dasaratha was still living. This decision pleased her.

But Manthara, a maid-servant, did not want Rama to be king. If she could somehow convince Kaikeyi to change the king's mind, her position at the palace would be secure.

That evening, she spoke to Kaikeyi in secret. "If Rama takes the throne, you would lose all your control over the king. If Rama is crowned, his mother will control of the kingdom Your rule will come to an end. Awake. Act now. You must convince Dasaratha that it is your son who should be king."

Kaikeyi believed Manthara. She decided to see Dasaratha.

She tried everything to convince Dasaratha to listen to her.

"Dasaratha," Kaikeyi began, "Do you remember that fateful day I saved your life in battle? Do you remember how I stopped your runaway
chariot. "

"Yes," replied the king.

"And do you remember what you said after I saved your life?"

Without waiting for an answer, she said, " Oh my powerful king and beloved husband you promised me two boons. Hear my boons now so that they may be granted."

The king reluctantly listened to his wife's requests.

"First," she began. "I wish to have my son, Bharata, placed upon the throne of Ayodhya. Second, I want Rama banished from the kingdom for a period of no less than fourteen years."

The king fell to his knees and begged his young wife not to hold him to these dreadful wishes.

As a righteous and honest man, he knew he could not go back on his word. Yet, he couldn't bear to ask Rama to forsake the throne and go away for fourteen years. He turned pale and speechless.

Kaikeyi told Rama the terrible news. Rather than argue, Rama comforted his father.

"Father, your word is law. I shall do whatever you bid. It is the sacred duty of a son to respect his father."

Then, he turned to his own mother Kausalya, and requested "Please be sure that father installs Bharata as crown prince."

Rama knelt and touched the feet of his parents respectfully. He stood, turned and left the palace.

Lakshmana declared, "I shall destroy anyone who opposes your right to the throne.."

Rama responded, "No, Lakshmana. You know it is my sacred duty, my dharma, to fulfill these wishes."

"My brother, if you must leave Ayodhya, then I shall follow you," Lakshmana said.

Rama tried to convince Sita to remain, but she said sobbing, "And, it is my duty, my dharma, as a wife to be at your side. How can I live without you? I must join you."

Rama tried hard to convince them to stay but they were insistent.

"Then, Sita, come with me," Rama said.

Rama also gave his brother permission to join them.

As the three left the palace, they cast away their royal robes and put on the clothes of hermits.

The people of Ayodhya wept as Rama, Sita and Lakshmana passed from the city. As the chariot went from sight, Dasaratha cried, "Rama! Rama! Do not leave me."

In time, Dasaratha lost the will to live. His heart simply gave out. Ayodhya mourned the loss of their king.

In a few days, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita crossed the river Ganges searching for a land undisturbed and isolated from everyone.

Soon they reached Chitrakoot, a beautiful place with many trees and streams. It was paradise. They built a small hut near a stream.

Several days had passed. Lakshmana, while hunting in the forest, heard the pounding of a thousand hooves. He climbed a tree to see whose army was approaching. To his amazement, he saw the lead horseman carrying the flag of Ayodhya. Bharata had found his brothers. Lakshmana was sure that his brother had come to kill them.

Lakshmana called to Rama: "A great army is approaching led by our brother, Bharata. I will kill him with my own hands."

"Don't be a fool," Rama said. "He is our brother and he is the king. We must welcome him."

Bharata embraced his brothers. He cried, "My heart is filled with grief and shame. Grief for the loss of our noble father. Shame for being offered the throne that you rightfully deserve. Come back to Ayodhya and be our king."

"That cannot be done," Rama said. "I gave my word and I shall stay here for fourteen years and no less. Then and only then will I return."

Nothing could sway Rama.

"Rama, my brother," Bharata declared, "as long as you are in exile, no one shall be king. To ensure this give me your sandals. I will place them on the throne. For the next fourteen years I will serve our land in your name. And, if after those fourteen years, you do not return, I shall walk into a fire and die."

Bharata took the sandals, mounted his horse and left the forest. In Kosala, Bharata put Rama's sandals on the red and gold Ayodhya throne.

## The Forest Life

Several days passed. Rama, Lakshmana and Sita walked south until they came upon Dandaka forest. Once a beautiful place, Dandaka was now a barren wasteland. Shreds of bark from dead trees littered the ground. Stumps of trees were all that remained of a once lush forest. The sound of the wind seemed to warn anyone who approached. At night demons prowled the land in search of flesh.

Religious men who gave up all worldly comforts and became hermits also lived in the forest. They spoke of the horrors that Ravana's demons had done. Rama and Lakshmana promised they would kill all these demons.

After ten years, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita crossed the Godavari River and reached Panchavati. Here was a magnificent forest, untouched by demons. The air was fragrant with the smell of flowers. Fruit grew on every vine. Birds sang joyfully.

"Let us build a hut here." Rama said.

Nearby lived the ancient vulture king, Jatayu. Jatayu made friends with them and enjoyed guarding Sita while the brothers hunted.

Just beyond the clearing lived Shurpanakha, the she-demon. She was Ravana's sister. She had a pot belly, huge ears, claws on her fingers and toes, slits for eyes, and dirty hair.

One day she saw Rama in the forest. She put down the bone she was gnawing on and said, "I want him for my husband."

Using her magical powers, she turned herself into a beautiful maiden.

She asked Rama, "Why does such a strong, handsome man like you live in this forest? Who are you?"

Rama told her his story. Upon seeing Sita, the she-demon said, "That woman is not good enough for you."

Rama responded, "And who, might I ask, is?"

"I am. I can make you happy."

"Perhaps I should introduce you to my brother, Lakshmana," Rama said half-jokingly.

Sensing that Rama was not interested in her, the demon grew angry. She assumed her original form and jumped on Sita.

In an instant, Lakshmana took his gold-handled knife from his belt and cut off the she-demon's nose and ears. She howled in pain as she fled.

Shurpanaka ran until she met her brothers Khar and Dushan who lived on the edge of the forest. Seeing his sister's bloodied face, Khar cried, "Who has done this to you?"

His wounded sister whimpered, "A human."

"A human!" Khar replied, "What human can do this? Take us to them. We will kill them."

Khar gathered his army of demon warriors and marched into the forest.

Lakshmana noticed the sky growing darker. Day seemed to turn into night. Then he looked again. The sky was filled with flying demons. Upon seeing this, Rama told Sita to remain in the hut. With Lakshmana at his side, Rama would face Khar's forces. Rama fired his golden arrows skyward. With each shot, mortally wounded demons fell to earth.

The fierce battle continued. No magic or weapons could save the demons from Rama's divine weaponry. In the end, Khar and his 14,000 warriors were slain.

Shurpanakha watched in horror as her brothers and their army were destroyed. She hurried to Lanka to see her brother, Ravana.

"Oh, Ravana. Khar and Dushan have been killed by humans. All their warriors are dead, too," Shurpanakha cried.

Ravana rose from his throne. The crowns on his ten heads glistened. He raised his ten left arms pointing to his disfigured sister and said, "And how many thousands of humans fought so well?"

"There are but two, my lord." answered Shurpanakha weeping.

"Two!" roared Ravana, his voice echoing through the palace.

"The two banished princes from Ayodhya. They have done this alone," his sister said.

"What gods are on their side?" Ravana wondered.

"One more thing," Shurpanakha added. "Rama's wife, Sita, is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. She would make a lovely queen."

"Sita," said Ravana.

"Whoever Sita embraces as her husband will outgain the gods in happiness," she added.

"Perhaps there is a way to revenge my sister's wounds and avenge the loss of my two brothers," Ravana thought. "Maybe I can punish Rama in a way he will never expect."

Ravana summoned his magic chariot and flew off. Over the vast ocean and great mountains he travelled until he landed at the den of Mareech, the magician. This magician was able to assume the form of any human or beast.

Ravana told Mareecha about Rama. He also spoke of his desire to take Sita from the forest, carry her back to Lanka and make her his queen.

I shall do whatever I can to help," said the magician.

He continued. "I will go to the Chilrakoot forest where I shall change into a golden deer and stand near their hut. I will lure Rama away. You will do the rest."

The next day, a beautiful deer appeared at the stream in Panchavati. Sita was enchanted by it.

"Please capture that deer for me," Sita asked Rama.

Lakshmana looked carefully at the creature. He told his brother, "This deer is too beautiful. It is too perfect. I have never seen a deer like that before. Brother, approach it with caution."

"Stay with Sita, " Rama told Lakshmana.

"I will, my lord," Lakshmana replied.

No sooner had Rama taken a step toward the deer than it darted into the woods. It was taking Rama farther and farther from the hut. Then deep in the forest, the deer paused. Rama moved closer to it. As he did so, the deer changed into the form of Mareech.

"Lakshmana was right," cried Rama. His heart was filled with fear. He ran as fast as he could.

Then he heard a voice that sounded exactly like his own cry out, "Lakshmana! Help me!"

Rama knew he had been tricked. He hoped his brother would ignore these cries.

"Lakshmana," sighed Sita. "That is your brother, my husband. He is crying for help. You must go to him."

"But Rama told me not to leave your side."

Sita insisted, "You must help him."

"I cannot," replied Lakshmana.

"You cannot? Are you not worried for my husband's safety? How can you just stand there? Do you not help him because he is only your half-brother? Or because he is my husband?"

"Then I shall find him," said Sita.

"No!" said Lakshmana.

"If you do not go after him, Lakshmana, I shall kill myself."

Finally Lakshmana made his decision. Before he left, he drew a circle around the entrance to the hut.

"Sita," he said, "do not step beyond this magical circle. Inside of it you will be safe."

Lakshmana grasped his quiver and ran in the direction of Rama's voice.

From behind a tree, Ravana watched his plan unfold perfectly.

In an instant, he changed himself into a *sanyasi*, an old wise man, clutching a begging bowl.

Seeing this common sight, and knowing it was her duty to feed the poor, Sita offered the man fruit. Then Ravana noticed the magical circle. He knew that as long she remained within the circle, he could not get her. He had to get Sita outside of it.

"Take this offering," said Sita.

"I am a *sanyasi*. I cannot enter your home. To accept your gracious offering you must leave your home."

Sita hesitated. She had always helped the poor. How could she ignore this man? Disregarding Lakshmana's warning, Sita stepped beyond the circle.

Then like a tiger springing from high grass, Ravana grabbed Sita and placed her in his chariot.

Sita screamed, but it was too late. The chariot rose into the sky and sped off to Lanka.

As Ravana headed south, Jatayu, the great eagle, saw Sita. Jatayu spread his huge wings and flew up to the chariot. "Free Sita," Jatayu declared "or I shall kill you."

Ravana ignored the threat. Jatayu tore off one of the chariot's railings. He gently removed Sita from the chariot and set her on the earth.

In blind fury, Jatayu attacked tearing off Ravana's arms and heads. Blood spurted from Ravana's mutilated body. As fast as Ravana lost an arm or head, it grew back. Jatayu was growing tired from the fight. Sensing this, Ravana drew his sword and cut off both of Jatayu's wings. The brave bird fell to the ground dying. Sita caressed Jatayu.

She thanked him for trying to save her. In an instant, Ravana pulled Sita back into the chariot and staggered back to Lanka.

Once in the city, Ravana tried to convince Sita to stay in Lanka and be his queen. But Sita would not listen. She loved only Rama. Hearing this Ravana led Sita out of the palace and into a garden. He guarded her with a hundred demons.

Back in the forest, Lakshmana found Rama unharmed. Terror filled Lakshmana's heart. He, too, had been tricked.

Upon returning to the hut, Rama cried out,"Sita is gone. What will I do?"

Rama knelt down and cried uncontrollably. "What must she be suffering?" he wondered.

Rama gathered his strength. He said, "This act shall not go unpunished. I will slay Ravana and his entire family."

## Rama's Stay in Kiskindha

Rama and Lakshmana began their search for Sita. They entered Kiskindha, the kingdom of the monkeys. Kiskindha was located south of Kosala. Soon they came to a mountain where Sugriva lived. He was the ruler of the monkey kingdom. Hanuman, a devoted follower of Sugriva, guarded the entrance to the kingdom. Seeing the brothers approach, he ordered them to halt.

"Who are you?" Hanuman asked.

"I am Rama, the exiled prince of Ayodhya. This is my brother, Lakshmana. We wish to see your king. I am hoping he can help us find my wife, Sita. She was taken by Ravana."

Rama and Lakshmana met Sugriva. They told their story.

Sugriva said, "I, too, am in exile. My brother seized my kingdom and my queen."

Sugriva paused. He thought about Rama's story. Then said. "Help me regain my throne and I will help you find your wife.

One of my people saw Sita being carried off to Lanka. As she passed overhead, she dropped this."

Rama reached out his hand. It was one of Sita's ornaments.
Tears filled Rama's eyes.

Rama and Lakshmana did as they were asked. They defeated Sugriva's brother and won back the throne.

It was now the rainy season. Rama and Lakshmana returned to the forest. They could not begin their search for Sita until the rains stopped in autumn. Rama grew more depressed. The rain seemed to Rama like tears from the gods.

Then when the sun shone upon the land again, Hanuman arrived. Sugriva had fulfilled his promise. The monkey warrior was accompanied by a great monkey army. Hanuman divided his troops into four divisions. Each division would go in search of Sita for one month.

At the end of the month, three of the four divisions returned with no word of Sita's whereabouts. Only Hanuman's division had yet to return.

## Hanuman's Prank

One day as Hanuman and his men searched for Sita, they saw a great bird on a mountainside. This bird was the brother of Jatayu. Hanuman told the bird about his search. Then he asked, "Do you know where Sita is?"

"Yes," the bird said, "She is in the Asoka garden near Ravana's palace."

"How do I get to her?" asked Hanuman.

"You must cross a great ocean," the bird said.

Hanuman's army marched to the mighty ocean. There was no way they could cross this great body of water.

"We must return," said one of the monkey warriors. "How can we get to the other side?"

In a loud voice, Hanuman declared, "I will cross this ocean and rescue Sita."

Hanuman prayed for strength. He saw the unhappy image of Rama. Hanuman prayed to Rama. Then incredibly, he began to grow. He grew so huge that the ground began to shake.

With a great cry, "Victory to Rama," Hanuman leapt into the sky.

The monkey army cheered as their leader flew across the great ocean. The gods smiled down on Hanuman as they admired his courage and devotion.

Nothing could stop Hanuman. On the horizon, he could see Lanka. As he approached the city, he changed back to his normal size. Once in Lanka, he set out to find Sita.

Soon he came upon Ravana's palace. He looked in each of the palace gardens, but he could not find Sita. How could he return without Sita or some word of her whereabouts. Then he saw a grove of trees. Beneath one of the trees was the most beautiful woman Hanuman had ever seen. She was crying and repeating, "Rama, Rama."

"I have found her," Hanuman declared. "Lord Rama will be so happy."

Hanuman looked around. He noticed that Sita was surrounded by many she-demons.

Just as Hanuman was about approach her, he saw Ravana coming. The king of Lanka was sat on the ground next to Sita. He was saying, "Sita, come with me. Come live in my palace. I will make you my queen. You can have anything you wish."

Hanuman hid from view.

Sita spoke: "How dare you speak to me this way. You have kidnapped me. I am Rama's wife, King Janaka's daughter. Rama will come for me. He will rescue me and kill you and all you demons. If you let me go, I will try to spare your life."

Ravana seemed hurt by Sita's words. Anger and sorrow filled Ravana's heart. He knew at that moment he would never have Sita.

"Then you shall remain here," he said as he turned away.

Hanuman did not move a muscle. He waited and waited. The she-demons guarding Sita were getting tired. One by one they fell asleep.

Here was his chance to speak to Sita. Hanuman approached her and knelt at her feet. "Do not fear. I am Hanuman, Rama's servant and messenger. He has sent me to find you. He cries for your return."

"How do I know you are telling me the truth? You may be just another demon in disguise." Sita said.

Hanuman reached into his pocket and removed Rama's ring. "Here," he said, "This should prove that Rama has sent me."

Sita pressed her hands to her face and cried. "I am sorry I doubted you. Go to Rama and tell him where I am. Tell him I will wait for him to save me." Sita gave Hanuman a jewel.

"Here. Take this to my lord as proof of my love."

Suddenly the demons awoke. They attacked Hanuman. He killed them with ease.

Hanuman was finally taken to the palace. Ravana ordered him killed.

One of Ravana's wise men reminded the king, "It is not permitted to kill a messenger."

"Then we shall punish him. Set his tail on fire. Let him return home that way," Ravana declared.

As the king's men wrapped Hanuman's tail in cloth to set it on fire he grew it longer and longer. The more they wrapped, the longer Hanuman grew his tail. Finally, Ravana ordered, "Set it on fire!" cried Ravana.

With his long tail on fire, Hanuman flew into the sky. He decided to set the city of Lanka ablaze to punish Ravana. He flew low over the city and set each building, temple, palace and garden on fire. Flames shot high into the sky. As he flew over Asoka garden he made sure Sita was safe. Then before he headed home, he put his tail in the ocean to put out the fire.

## The Great War

Hanuman received a great welcome from his warriors. They hurried back to tell Rama the good news. By now Rama had given up all hope of ever seeing Sita alive again. When Rama saw Hanuman returning, he ran to him.

"I pray you have word of Sita."

Without saying a word, Hanuman gave Rama Sita's jewel.

Rama praised Hanuman for his bravery and said, "You have given me reason to live again."

Meanwhile back at Lanka palace, Vibhishana, Ravana's brother, tried to save Sita's life. "Let her go," he said, "so we can save our kingdom from Rama's anger."

Ravana responded angrily, "If I return Sita, I will be ridiculed by all the gods and demons."

warned again, "Do not underestimate Rama's strength. It is said that Rama is an incarnation of Vishnu sent to earth to destroy all that is unholy. With his powers he will destroy Lanka. Why do you tempt such a fate?"

"I fear no one," Ravana roared.

"Then," Vibhishana said, "I can no longer remain in Lanka. Save yourself brother."

"Then go," shouted Ravana. "I have no place in my kingdom for the weak and timid."

Vibhishana left the palace and magically flew to Rama. Arriving at his camp, Vibhishana declared, "I am the brother of Ravana. I tried to convince my brother to return your wife. But he refused and I left Lanka.

I wish to join you and fight at your side."

Rama responded, "Vibhishana, you have rejected evil for good. You are welcomed here."

Now Rama had to make a battle plan. Vibhishana told him that Ravana and his evil son, Indrajit, had great magical powers. His army was made up of millions of demons.

For his honesty and bravery, Rama promised Vibhishana that he would become the new king of Lanka.

Rama stood on the shoreline of the great ocean and spoke to the ocean god. "Hear me," he called. "I am Rama. I have weapons that are beyond imagination. In an instant I can dry your ocean. If you wish to avoid this fate, show me how to reach Lanka."

The ocean said, "Rama, here is Nala, son of the great builder. He will build you a bridge across these waters. I shall support that bridge."

With the help of the monkey army, Nala put up a bridge made of wood, rocks, and stones. Every creature helped in its own way. It took five days to complete the bridge to Lanka.

Rama, Hanuman, and the monkey army crossed the bridge by nightfall. As they crossed into Lanka they shouted, "Victory to Rama!"

Hanuman's army surrounded the city. Rama knew that Sita would soon be safe.

Ravana called for two of his demons. "Change yourselves into monkeys. Move among the monkey army and find out what you can."

The demons entered The camp and Vibhishana recognized them. They were brought to Rama. He decided not to punish them. He said, "Send a message to your king. Tell him that I have come to save my wife and kill him."

Ravana was angered by his inability to learn about Rama's plans. Enraged he called upon one of his demons.

"Make me an exact copy of Rama's head. Then bring it to me," he said.

Ravana took the head to Sita. "O, Sita," he said, "Rama has failed in his attempt to rescue you. His army has been destroyed. That is the end of your hope. The time has come to change your mind and become my queen."

Sita looked at Ravana and said, "I do not believe any of this."

Ravana responded: "I thought you might say that. So I brought the head of your husband, soaked in blood and sand, to prove my words."

Sita collapsed wailing, "Alas, O Rama, you have followed your dharma. But I have been widowed. Widowhood is a terrible tragedy in the life of a woman devoted to dharma. You came to save me, but you gave your own life.

O Rama you are happy now. You have rejoined your beloved father in heaven. But what shall I do?

O Rama, I am the terrible woman who has brought all this upon you. I pray take me too. Take me with you, my love."

Angered by Sita's devotion to Rama, Ravana stormed from the garden.

When he returned to the palace, he ordered all his troops to march toward the city gates.

For four days both armies stood poised.

On the morning of the fifth day, the great battle began. Each side suffered terrible losses. Blood filled the streets of Lanka. Bodies of fallen warriors were everywhere.

Rama and Lakshmana fought gallantly.

Hanuman was injured in a duel. Vibhishana showed great valor.

Indrajit, Ravana's son, rained poison arrows upon Rama and Lakshmana. So overwhelming was this attack, that the two brothers suffered many wounds. "I shall send both of you to the house of death," cried Indrajit.

Rama and Lakshmana were bleeding heavily, but they fought on.

Indrajit hurled even more powerful weapons at them. Each weapon took a new toll. Rama and Lakshmana fell to the ground unconscious.

Vibhishana prayed to the gods for their safety. "Protect Rama and Lakshmana while they are hurt."

While the monkey warriors stood by grief-stricken, the battle raged on without Rama and Lakshmana. Ravana's demons made themselves invisible and attacked the heart of the monkey army. Ravana's forces were merciless. Thousands were killed by unseen attackers.

Seeing his forces in retreat, Hanuman charged on with a great cry. "Victory to Rama! Death to Ravana!"

With his remarkable strength, Hanuman smashed the skull of every visible enemy. He challenged any of Ravana's men to advance. Seeing Hanuman's great courage, the monkey-army rallied behind their leader and fought harder.

Ravana's army was losing its advantage. Angered by this news, he decided to join the battle. He climbed in his chariot and soared above Lanka in search of Rama.

By now Rama and Lakshmana, having regained consciousness but still dazed, returned to the fight. Ravana viewed the battle scene from the clouds. Then he spotted Lakshmana. He aimed his magic bow and fired. The arrow cut through the air and struck Rama's brother in the chest. He collapsed. Hanuman rushed to Lakshmana's side. He gently lifted the wounded prince and carried him to safety.

Just when things were starting to look up for Rama's warriors, Indrajit returned to the battle. He was now invisible. All the monkey soldiers could hear was the mocking laughter of Indrajit as he soared over them. Indrajit's weapons took an enormous toll on the monkeys. By the time he returned to the palace, every monkey was either wounded or killed. Only Rama, Hanuman, and Vibhishana remained standing.

Rama looked upon around and said, "The battle has been lost."

Then in a weakened voice, Jambuvan, one of the leaders of the army, said, "No, Rama. There is still a way we can regain the advantage and defeat Ravana. Tell Hanuman to go to Kailasa Mountain. There he will see a blazing hill of medicinal herbs. Have him bring these herbs back before sunrise and our army will be saved."

Hanuman rose above the earth and flew off with great speed.

When he reached the mountain, he saw the hill that Jambuvan described. But he could not find the herbs. Realizing time was short, he uprooted the entire hill and carried it back to Lanka. Hanuman flew off balancing the hill in one hand.

When he returned to Lanka, the monkey warriors began inhaling the healing air of the herbs. One-by-one, they rose to their feet and regained their strength. Even Lakshmana recovered from his near-mortal wound. Hanuman returned the hill to its original place.

Rama embraced Hanuman and said, "I know no one who shows your valor and devotion."

With that, Hanuman cried out, "Victory to Rama!"

Using all their weapons, Rama, Lakshmana, Vibhishana, and Hanuman finally overpowered Indrajit. Ravana's son had fought long and hard, but now he was dead.

Hearing of his son's death, Ravana decided now was the time to kill Rama and put an end to this bloodshed.

Arming himself with his most powerful weapons, Ravana left Lanka palace. He spotted Rama leading the monkey army toward the city gates. Ravana fired a magic arrow at Rama. Seeing the arrow, Rama split it with his own arrow.

Ravana tried everything to overpower his foe. But each time, Rama had an answer.

The fight lasted two days. Rama could feel his strength leaving him. He turned to one of his sages and said, "My spirit is nearly gone. My arms and legs ache. My heart wants to go on, but my body can no longer respond."

The sage said to Rama: "Listen carefully to this secret. It is the heart of the sun that will bring you victory and the auspiciousness to destroy Ravana. Worship the sun, O Rama. He alone protects all beings. Pray to him."

As Ravana was reloading his weapons, Rama knelt to pray to the sun.

Then the sage said, "Rama, you will this very moment conquer Ravana."

After looking at the sun, Rama felt his strength return. His heart was filled with joy.

Ravana attacked again. Both armies stood by and watched.

Rama reached for his most powerful weapon, the Brahma-missile, to be used only when all else had failed. He took it to his hands. As he did so, the earth shook. All the warriors covered their eyes and fell to the earth.

Rama stood poised. He aimed the weapon at the on-rushing Ravana. He fired. The missile struck Ravana's chest and exploded. Ravana fell dead.

"Victory to Rama!" shouted his men.

The gods praised Rama. The earth became steady once more. The wind blew softly. The sun shone brighter than ever. Vibhishana knelt at the body of his dead brother and burst into tears. "Why didn't you listen to my words? Why were you so overcome with Sita and power?"

Rama touched Vibhishana's shoulder and said, "Our ancients say that you should not mourn a mighty fallen warrior on the battlefield. Victory is the monopoly of none. Weep not for one who is no more. Rise, for we still have work to do."

Vibhishana prepared the funeral rites for his brother. "My brother was so evil, people will try to keep me from giving him an honorable funeral."

Rama replied, "No one will stop this rite. Hostility ends with death. He is your brother and he is mine too. You must honor him with this rite."

Following the funeral rite, Rama made Vibhishana the new king of Lanka.

Vibhishana's wife and maidens took Sita from the garden. A beautiful sari was placed around her. Jewels made her sparkle. A scarlet spot adorned her forehead.

Sita could not wait to see her victorious husband.

Rama entered the palace and Sita bowed at his feet. He felt both love and sorrow for his wife. "We shall return to Ayodhya," he said.

## Period After Coronation

Once back in Ayodhya, Rama seemed troubled. Many people in the city expressed doubt about Sita's faithfulness while in Lanka.

One day a messenger came to Rama and said, "I fear that the people of our kingdom have lost faith in your wife's virtue. Ravana, they say, made her unfit to be your queen. Even the lowest men whisper, 'How can Rama forget that Sita lived with another man?"

Rama stood at the window of his room and looked out upon Ayodhya. Sorrow filled his heart.

Lakshmana came to see his brother. Rama turned to him and asked, "What is a king? Kings cannot be blamed or ridiculed. They are above all other men. They are beyond doubt."

"I know of what you speak of, " his brother replied. "I have heard the ugly rumors and lies."

"I have tried to think of a way to deal with this problem. I cannot rule Ayodhya and not have my people respect my queen. Therefore, with great sorrow and resolve, I have made a decision. Before dawn tomorrow you and Sumantra will take Sita back to the forest. Leave her there and return."

"But she will die."

"This is the nature of the world," Rama said. "This is what I must do."

Lakshmana said sadly, "The dharma law is difficult to know and sometimes more difficult to follow. This act is wrong. There is no way that Sita would ever have disobeyed you or done what the people say. I know this in my heart."

"Do as I say, my brother."

Before sunrise, Ayodhya was shroudded in dense fog. It semed as if the sun refused to show itself this fateful day.

Sumantra, Lakshmana and Sita crossed the river in a small fishing boat. Lakshmana sat at Sita's side. Sita could see him crying.

"What is wrong?" she asked.

"My brother, your husband has listened too long and too well to the words of the people of Ayodhya. They say you were unfaithful to Rama. And to avoid any more disgrace, our king has ask me to escort you back to the forest."

Sita turned to Sumantra. "Do not look for reason here," he said. "This act is beyond men's knowing. Rama will live alone from this day forth."

"Why must this be so?" cried Sita.

Sumantra continued: "All the universe is a sign to be read rightly. War and peace, love and separation are hidden gateways we must pass to get to other worlds. Let us not grow old thinking that truth is what most people see or say it is.

Sita, you will get back to Rama only by entering this forest. This world is like a breath on a mirror. It does not last. Have patience."

Sumantra and Lakshmana returned Sita to the forest.

Sita smiled and said, "Good-bye, Sumantra. You have touched my heart with your wise words and given me new hope. Good-bye Lakshmana, my borther-in-law. Be well."

Sita stood on the river bank as Sumantra and Lakshmana's boat crossed the glistening river. Then she heard the soft voice of the river goddess say, "Let life go, Sita. Do not outlive life. Come home. Come home. Dive into me."

Sita was about to step into the river when she heard the voice of an old man.

"Do not enter the river," he said.

Sita looked at the shaggy old man and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Valmiki, a poet and a hermit. I live in this forest. Make my home yours."

He led Sita to his home in the forest.

There Sita gave birth to Rama's twins sons, Kusa and Lava. For the next twelve years she and her sons lived with Valmiki.

During that time, Valmiki composed a poem called the Ramayana. When he finished it, he taught the poem to the boys line-by-line. He taught them how to sing the poem while playing the flute and drum.

The boys learned well.

In Ayodhya, King Rama decided to hold a great public festival. He invited everyone in the kngdom to take part. There would be music, story-telling and singing.

Kusa and Lava came to Ayodhya to recite what Valmiki called the earth's first poem.

On the first day of the festival, the boys began singing the story. Rama heard about this wonderful poem and came to see it performed. After hearing only a few lines, Rama asked, "What is this beautiful song called?"

"Ramayana," said Kusa.

Rama looked at the twins. His heart ached with emotion. "These are my sons!" he declared.

He sent a messenger to find Sita and convince her to return to Ayodhya.

The next day Sita returned. She was dressed in bright gold and scarlet. Rama was overjoyed.

Sita approached Rama and said, "Let me prove my innocence before you once and for all."

"I give you permission," Rama replied.

Then Sita took a step back and said, "Mother earth, if I have been faithful to my husband, take me home."

The earth rumbled. The ground rolled and moved beneath Sita. With a great noise the ground opened and took Sita back. The earth shook again and closed.

For that moment, everywhere in the whole universe, there was harmony.

"I will never see Sita again as long as I live on earth," Rama said. "It is a brief life given to us."

Rama ruled Ayodhya for a thousand years.

One day Rama he thought, "Where is my life? And where am I? I want to go home now. I was born of the god, Vishnu, and it is time for me to return to him."

Rama left the palace and entered the crowded street of Ayodhya. Everyone stood quietly as their king passed.

Rama continued walking until he reached the banks of the Sarayu. He touched its water with his feet. All the gods looked down on him. Even Brahma, the creator, came in person to see Rama.

He spoke to Rama: "Come, O Vishnu, join your brothers, Lakshmana, Satrughna, and Bharata. Return to Vishnu. Return to heaven."

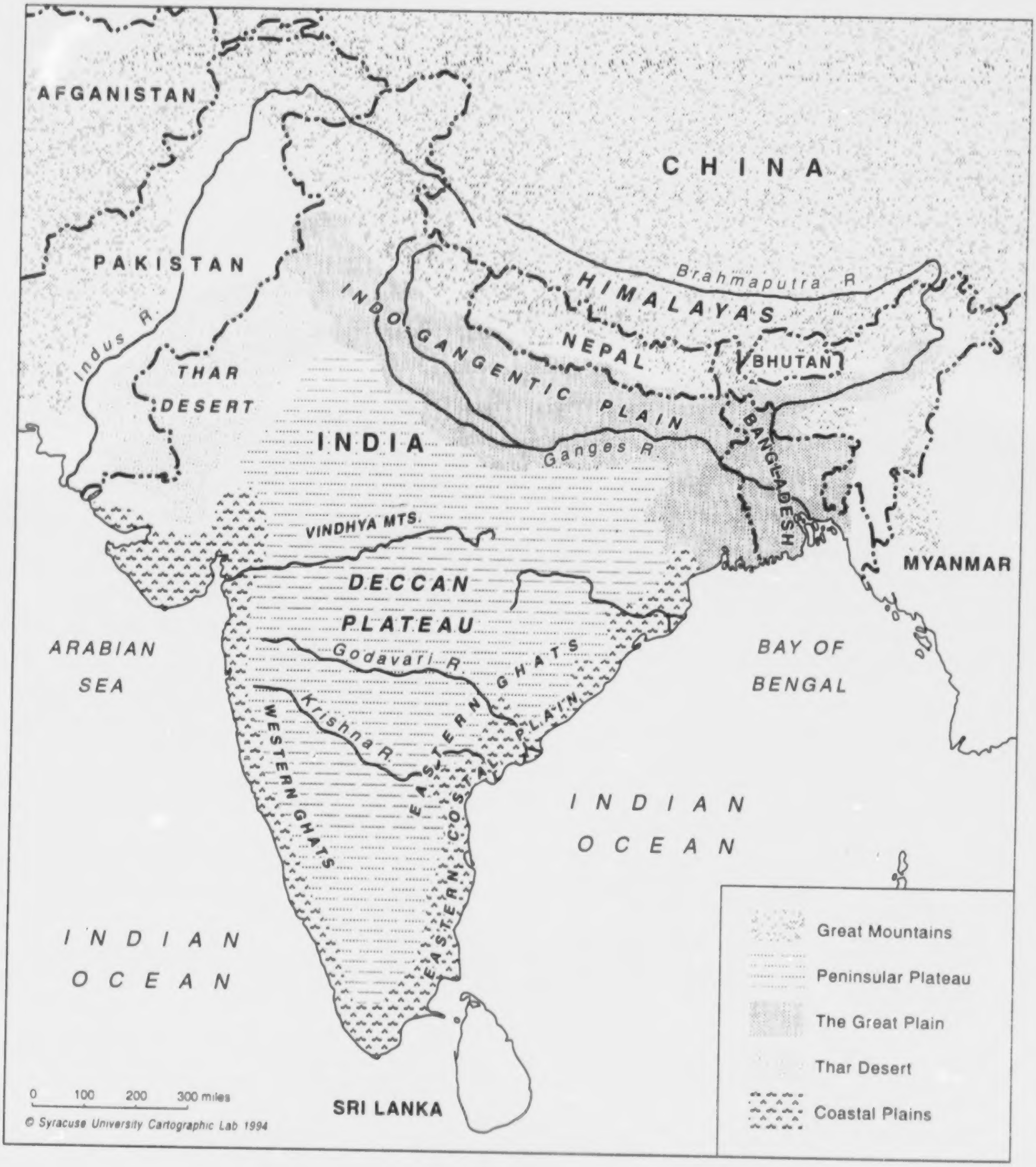
With Brahma's words, Rama smiled and stepped into the river. All of Rama's followers entered the river after him and all went to heaven. Rama was home.

The Ramayana was loved and praised by all. The gods were pleased.

Lava and Kusa traveled throughout India singing Valmiki's glorious poem about their father.

Wherever they went they said, "Men who listen to the Ramayana will live a long life. They will be free of sins and will have many sons. Women who listen to the Ramayana will be blessed with children like Rama and his brothers. All those who listen please Rama. Such is the glory of this story. May all who recite it or listen to it regularly find increased love, wisdom, and strength."

## Maps - Physical Divisions of India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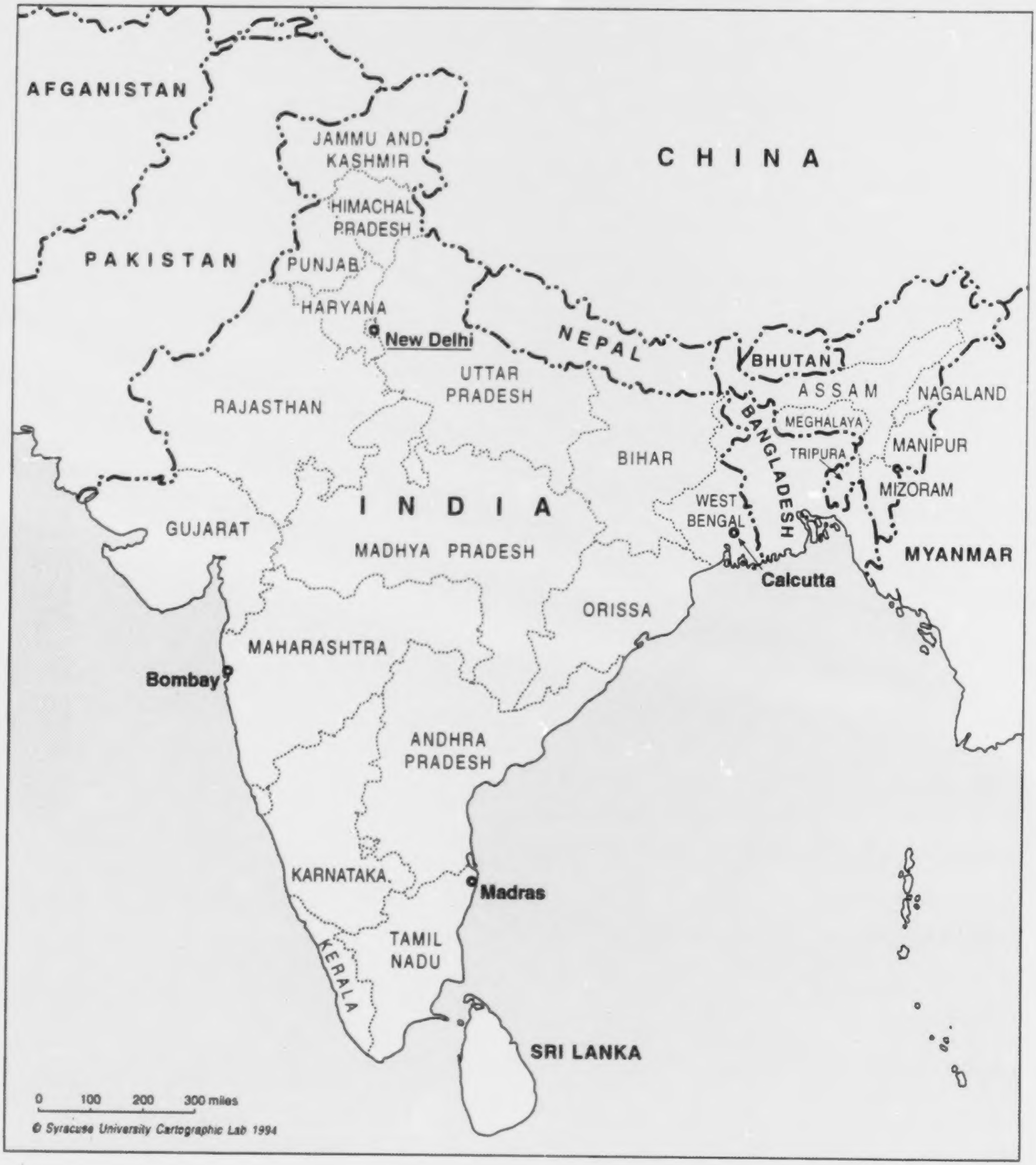
## Political Divisions of South Asia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# Chapter I

## How Is Ramayana Part of The Great Storytelling Tradition?

# Connecting Communication Arts and Social Studies

## UNIT 1, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: Oral Literature: What is the Role of Oral Storytelling?

### Major Ideas

- Oral literature transmits culture from one generation to the next, creating a sense of community.
- The Ramayana in India has retained a continuity of plot and character due to its religious significance.
- Often oral literature is the preferred voice of people working for social or political change.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- identify the characteristics of oral literature
- explore different purposes of the oral tradition
- decide what the role of oral tradition is in their own lives and contrast this with the role of oral tradition in India

### Teacher Background

*We remind you that most communication is oral, not written, and that while the written word has been extolled in western culture, humans are basically an oral species. Moreover, it is our orally shared stories, whether those of great heroes, a spider named Anansi or of the events of our day, that bind us together most forcefully as human beings. Oral literature has a variety of genres, characteristics and purposes.* ***Reading 1: Oral Literature*** *contains the concepts and ideas necessary to teach these lessons. Please read it before proceeding.*

### Springboard

- What are some "family stories" told at Thanksgiving, birthday parties and weddings in your home? (Remember, family can include friends -- people you have known a long time and see often)
- Are there any stories that most people in the United States know "by heart"?
- What would some of the stories be?
- Are there any stories that you would want to hear over and over?
- Did you ever see a movie more than three times? Why?

### Procedure

▹ Students should read **Reading 1: Oral Literature** before beginning this lesson. Students usually are most familiar with their own musical traditions as the current oral tradition.

- Based on the readings and your own knowledge, what oral literature is most popular in this country?
- What is the major purpose of this kind of literature?

Ask students to bring in examples of rap music from different cultures (e.g. Indian, Caribbean or American rap.) Play a few examples.

- Why are these songs so popular?
- What groups probably listen to these songs?
- What political and social issues are these songs about?
- What is the point of view of the singer? What action does he want people to take?
- Where do most people hear the music? On MTV? On cassettes? In concerts? Are they alone or in groups? Do you react to a song differently depending on where you are and who you are with?

(Option: Do a similar assignment with country music or any other genre with which your students are familiar and deals with social issues.)

**Summary/Application**

▹ Divide the class into groups and ask each group to identify an important issue in the school, community or country that they wish changed. Have each group create a poem, song or story that expresses their point-of-view.

▹ Assign readings from the unit on women and caste, UNIT 25, and ask student groups to address that issue in their summary activity.

**Alternate Strategies**

✎ Ask students to write a "family story." For homework, students can question family members to tell them their family story and then record it in their journal or learning log. Compare the two versions.

1. Divide class into groups of three. In each group, one student tells story as it would be told to a best friend. A second student retells the story as if to a parent. The third student retells the story as if to a teacher. (It is necessary to limit the time of each story to 5 minutes or less.) The class can then discuss what kinds of information and details are included or left out in each register.

2. One group of three students will choose one student to tell a story and the other two students will be the audience. They will record the story on tape. The remaining students will write a story. The teacher will transcribe the taped stories over night and distribute copies of that story and a representative written story to the class the following day. The class will compare the written story to the oral tradition.

3. Discuss reaction time differences between written and oral texts to current sensational events. Collect jokes and anecdotes about a current sensational event and discuss how soon after the event was publicized they began to circulate.

## Oral Literature: What is the role of oral storytelling?

### Reading 1: Oral Literature

*What is oral literature?*

Literature seems to be something we read, so the term "oral literature" seems to be a contradiction in terms. The term "oral tradition" seems too formal for stories that are told and retold in families, in villages before or after dinner, and in plays put on by people who are not professional actors/actresses.

*What kind of stories are told in oral traditions?*

Our lives are surrounded by stories. Fairy tales (like *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*) have an element of magic. Humans and non-humans, like fairies and monsters, share the world. Legends are stories that may have been told about a real person or happening, but grow and change as they are retold, like Johnny Appleseed, Pecos Bill, Wild Bill Hickock, Daniel Boone or even Bruce Lee, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles.

Myths are stories about gods and goddesses who are super-human and who are worshiped by humans because they have power over the universe and over individual people. Every culture has myths. In many societies -- African, North and South American, Japanese, European, and Egyptian for example -- many of these myths are told orally and never committed to paper.

Folktales are stories about humans and animals who act like humans. There may be a wicked witch or talking animals or other unreal character such as *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* and *Hansel and Gretel*. These stories usually have some lesson that the teller wants the listener to learn. There are many kinds of folktales. Fables are tales with a moral lesson that have animals as the main characters. The most famous fables are those told in Africa, the Panchatantra stories of India, or those told in Ancient Greece by Aesop.

Epics are long stories with many stories and episodes inside them. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are epics, as are King Arthur, The Knights of the Round Table, and The Ramayana of India. They span many years and even generations. Everything seems larger than life. They usually involve monsters and demons and long journeys. Usually there is a major problem to be solved or overcome.

A more common kind of storytelling takes place in families and among friends. Family stories are events or people which stand out because they are so unusual and interesting or funny. They give us a sense of family unity. As we tell the stories we have a sense of our family's importance and we are sharing something of ourselves, too.

Songs are stories set to rhythm and melody, poems of a special kind. While ballads, like Barbara Allen and The Ballad of Billie Jo are traditional, Rap, Country and Western, and Reggae are also examples of songs. We usually do not consider songs in the same league with myths and fairytales, but they sometimes serve the same purpose -- to communicate an important happening and how it affected people.

*What are some purposes of oral stories?*

All of these kinds of stories can do one or more of the following: explain why things are the way they are, educate young people in the ways their family and culture see the world, and entertain and amuse. They give us a feeling of belonging when you know the same stories you feel like a community, a group.

But storytellers have deeper motives as well. They can protest a situation in which they feel they are victims. The Uncle Remus stories of the American South tell the ways Brer Rabbit (the slave) outwits Brer

Bear (the master). Fools often turn out to be wiser than the educated; the poor know more than the rich. The tables are turned in a way that is not as dangerous to the protesters because it is not direct. Rap music and Country and Western music both tell how a group of people are fighting "mainstream" America.

*What are some of the advantages of oral storytelling?*

When asked if they would rather be in a culture that used books or one that just told stories, most teenagers would opt for books. We tend to think that things that are written down are somehow more true than things we are told. Often when someone tries to tell directions, the listener will say, "Just let me read it for myself." But there are many advantages to using stories to pass down information.

If your friend were robbed on the way to school, would you rather read about it in a letter, hear about it on the phone, or have your friend discuss it over lunch? When we are face-to-face we can use gestures, facial expressions and changes in our voice to make our meaning clear. Our listeners can ask questions and we can have a chance to clear up any misunderstandings. The story seems more real. We can emphasize the events that have meaning or importance for us and shorten the parts that don't. We can choose how to tell the story to different people. We don't tell the same version of a story to our mothers as we do to our best friend or our teacher.

Stories spread like wild-fire. They can let us react almost instantly to events that make headlines. Writing takes time. A book takes six months to print, even a letter to the editor takes time to write, deliver, be accepted and appear in the newspaper. All cultures in the world were mainly oral cultures until the explosion of printing technology in the mid-19th century. The development of printing also meant someone owned the presses.

Lastly, oral stories can be set to music.

*What are the advantages of written stories?*

When you write something down, you have time to think about what you want to say and how you want to say it. You can edit your work to make it clearer. Written work lasts -- it is a permanent record of what someone has found out, thinks or feels. Writers can reach a bigger audience -- even after they are dead. Texts can be translated more easily because the translator can use a dictionary and re-work difficult sentences. The writer does not have to be present when the story is heard. And the reader can enjoy a book privately, reading in their own room while eating a favorite snack food.

Some other advantages are less important. A writer can gain distance from a topic and be more objective. Time can go by between writing drafts. Eventually some writings will be recognized as particularly well done and be considered "classics" in their area.

*What are the disadvantages of oral storytelling?*

When there is no written text to refer to which has authority there is no way to know which version is right. The Bible, the Koran and the Talmud all offer texts which can be interpreted differently by different people. But when disagreements arise, each person can refer back to the book to support an opinion.

When everything has to be memorized, some things can be forgotten. The best example of this is forgetting the punch line of a joke, or leaving out the very information that makes it funny.

Oral storytelling always has to have an audience. You can never do it just for yourself. Even when you practice telling the story in the shower it is really practicing for an imaginary audience -- a kind of performance. Stories in a culture that rely on oral storytelling can never be private. How would you keep a journal, for example, in such a culture?

*What are the disadvantages of written texts?*

When you write a letter, an essay or a story, you have to imagine who your audience really is. You cannot look at their expression to know if you are boring them or interesting or amusing them. They cannot ask you questions when they don't understand or urge you to keep telling them more. It is also harder to show emotion in writing.

Once a work is published or a letter sent there is no way to change it or reverse it. You have to live with what you have written. Finally, what was said above about time delays in written work needs to be repeated -- writing and publishing take time and there is always a lag between the event and the written reaction.

Finally, written texts have been used by a few - those who could read and write and *color?* print - to control the many. These few could convince the many that their authority, derived from written texts, was legitimate. Often these written texts were religious or legal texts.

*How do oral stories change?*

Oral stories can and do change over time and from place to place. As they are passed from person to person they are re-interpreted by each teller. These are not deliberate mistakes, but choices to suit the teller's interests and creative and artistic sense. The oral storyteller might make up additional scenes or descriptions that "make the story better." The storyteller might change the story to match the current situation in a village or a family. If there has just been a flood, the story might change form an earthquake to a flood. Characters might be described so that they are recognizable as someone in the audience.

Storytellers also hear stories. When they come upon something that seems more interesting or new or fits their audience, they can simply add it to the original story and merge the two stories into a new story that has the best parts of both.

*What are the characteristics of most oral stories?*

Oral stories use repetition. This makes the rhythm and meter stronger. It emphasizes parts of the story that are important. The audience can remember the chorus and join in with the story teller. Sounds, words, phrases, choruses and refrains all are repeated. Sometimes melody is added.

Another device used often is onomatopoeia -- making sounds that imitate sounds in nature, such as zzzzzzzzzzzzzzz for a bumble bee or a snore.

Above all, oral stories are told in the language of the people in the audience. The exception is when the storyteller is reading from a text or imitating someone to create an effect.

The Ramayana is an Indian epic, with magic, mythological figures and legendary heroes. In India, the oral and written stories exist side by side. Almost all Indians know the basic story of the Ramayana. It was probably originally passed down by word of mouth. Over the years it was written down in three major texts, one in 200 B.C.E., and two in the 16th century. While people know the different versions, when they tell the story or put it on as a play, they make up the words, add their own episodes and do it the way they think is most interesting and entertaining.

# UNIT 1, LESSON 2

## Focus Question: The Ramayana: What is the Relationship Between Oral and Written Literature?

### Major Ideas

- Written texts and oral texts of the same story can coexist.
- Storytellers have developed an oral story structure that is passed down which reflects the interests and traditions of their region.
- Storytellers are often aware of the written texts but expand and supplement them, create dialogue between characters, and comment on the meaning of the text.

**Performance Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- identify and briefly describe the major characters in the *Ramayana*.
- utilize the written text as a frame for a loose script which can be used in improvising a performance.
- discuss the continuum of levels of improvisation found in different performances, e.g. Shakespearean plays, Biblical re-enactments, TV shows such as *Living Color* and *Saturday Night Live*, and informal narratives such as jokes and family stories.

### Teacher Background

*Our emphasis on the primacy of written literature has led us to believe that it has complicated structures, complex sentences, and the like. But recent work by sociolinguists, looking at examples of real human speech in context and at oral narratives, shows that while the rules are different, oral language is also bound by complex rules. Moreover, we speak according to the rules of the situation. Most of us know how to speak a number of different "styles" of speech: we can speak to parents, babies, teachers, the telephone operator, etc., all using different styles of speech with rules appropriate to the situation. Comedy, satire and irony are based on breaking these rules, rules that are not rules of proper grammar per se, but of proper grammar for that situation.*

*Many traditions present their stories in a variety of modes, both written and oral. Anyone who has seen or been part of a Nativity play knows that each production is different from any other. Some adhere more closely to the Biblical verses than others. The same is true of the Ramayana. There are many written versions of the Ramayana and some performances are based on reciting these written versions. Others are less closely tied to a written script. In the video clips, you will find a school enactment of the Ramayana, performed as part of a Republic Day celebration, as well as a village "play," with backdrop, curtains, and costumes. In video???? Have your students note the differences between these productions. What do they think the relationship between written and oral is?*

### Springboard

- How do people learn about religious stories such as the Bible? (Possible sources: ceremonies, sermons, family re-tellings, readings, TV, movies, study of Western art, Bible school or Hebrew school, church and elementary school pageants)

▹ Cecile B. DeMille made a movie of the New Testament called *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Show clip if it is possible.

- What part of the script came directly from the Bible, what parts were improvised, what parts could he have created from imagination, and what aspects would he want to keep historically accurate?
- If you were playing God and Jesus how would you feel?
- Which TV shows use the most improvisation and which use the least?

## Procedure

For homework the night before, students will read *The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Epic* and identify the major characters. Students will use this version of the *Ramayana* as a frame for a loose script which they will use in improvising a performance.

### Directions for Developing an Improvisation

❶ Divide class into 5 groups. Assign each group an episode of the Ramayana and indicate which lines of summary are relevant to their episode.

❷ Within each group, students choose a character role that they would like to play. Students share their descriptions of each character and discuss how they will write a loose script to perform the episode. They decide whether or not they will want a narrator and/or a commentator.

❸ Students decide who will begin the improvisation. This student records on a piece of paper his/her character's name, description, and dialogue. The student who thinks their character should follow takes the paper and records their character and dialogue. The loose script is written as the paper is passed around. Continue until the episode is complete.

❹ Students in each group will read their "script" and prepare their character's dialogue for the performance. Instruct students not to write a formal script. Performances (see Lesson 3) are not to exceed five minutes per group. Student groups will perform episodes without loose script or notes.

## Summary/Application

▹ The teacher shows part of the video that includes clips from the village Ramalila, and the student pageant from the video *Spotlight on Ramayana*.

▹ Using a chart on the board, students discuss the differences between the performances.

▹ Students compare what they have heard in the performances with their reading of the *Ramayana*.

- What parts of the *Ramayana* were essential to each performance?
- Where was improvisation possible? Why were those particular parts improvised and other parts maintained?
- How do the answers to the above question compare with the answers given about the movie version of the Bible?

## UNIT 1, LESSON 3

### Focus Question: What is the Role of a Performance?

### Major Ideas

- Performance traditions accommodate to styles and customs of the audience.
- Most performances today are a combination of written dialogue and improvisation

**Performance Objectives:** Students will be able to

- improvise a performance based on a written text
- articulate the factors involved in performance, such as setting, stage directions, dialogue, costumes, makeup and hairstyles, and the role of the director.
- analyze their experience in performing an episode of the Ramayana

### Teacher Background

*Many of those writing about folklore and oral traditions in today's world have focused on the idea of performance as being key to recognizing a piece of folklore. At another level, we could say that all speech is performed, some less so and some more so. The woman who says, "But have you heard the one about..." is keying, or marking, the beginning of a performance, in this case most probably of a joke. The man who says, "but when I was six I..." is marking for his children a piece of family folklore, often instructional or moral. The woman who arrives home at 5pm and says, "boy, did I have an awful day..." is marking yet another performance, but one less artistic and less structured than the two previous examples. The more rules about how to perform and the more critically a speech event is evaluated mark more or less performance. You could ask your students to think about performance by asking them about the rules for different kinds of speech events. Is a sermon more or less performed than a family story?*

*As with performances around the world,* ***The Ramayana*** *is performed in many different ways. Sometimes the text is chanted in temples. Sometimes the text is read aloud and actors mine the actions. Sometimes they dance the words. In others, the actors speak, often improvising their lines. The video accompanying this guide has performances that tend toward the improvised style, although the text is read during portions of the village play. The Miracle Plays of medieval Christian guilds had the same kind of interplay between text and improvisation, and between seriousness and playfulness. Improvisation allows for more immediate reactions to the audience and lets the actor "play off of" the audience. Sticking to a set script, especially one in a slightly archaic language (as is the case with both the Ramayana and the King James Version of the Bible), demands a different kind of relationship to audience.*

### Springboard

- Today we are going to do a "Saturday Night Live" version of the Indian epic **The Ramayana**. Student groups will perform their episodes from **The Ramayana**.

### Procedure

- In the front of the room is a microphone and/or a tape recorder. Each group will come up to present their episode as a radio play. The teacher will act as an announcer giving the title of the episode and names of the actors. Reminder: this is an improvisation, no scripts or notes are allowed.

## Summary/Application

- Class will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of improvisation.

Possible contributions include:

*fun;*
*more accurate colloquial speech*
*strengthens memory*
*creates a sense of cultural community*
*more immediate and real*
*can be used as a vehicle for comedy*
*heighten one's awareness of language*
*promotes audience identification with characters*
*encourages audience reaction and interpersonal quality*
*acting style is very powerful and varied*
*requires strong character identification on the part of the actor*
*requires impromptu speaking as there is no real chance to rehearse or re-do*
*actor's lines may create surprises and be difficult to answer or react to*

- Audiotape could be played for another class and their reactions recorded.
- Students could be given a protocol or checklist for judging other groups and record their reactions to the performances.
- Comparable segments of the *TV Ramayana* can be shown and compared to the class performance.
- Students can re-tell **The Ramayana** to a neighbor, child or relative and record on tape or in writing the explanations for necessary changes in plot or character, and side comments used to entertain the child. They should also record the child's reaction and questions. A follow-up question could be a comparison of the group performance with the oral retelling.

## UNIT 1, LESSON 4

### Focus Question: What is the Role of the Visual Arts in Storytelling?

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:**

- identify different aspects of culture in India by looking at pictures and writing a story.
- write a well developed story that has a beginning, middle and end.
- critically look at a picture and select aspects of culture shown there.

### Teacher Background

*Culture is a term that most students feel they know yet they do not know how to recognize it in settings including their own. They seem to take it for granted and think it as natural as the air they breath. Culture can be seen in plays, dances, paintings, sculpture etc.*

*The purpose of this lesson is to give the students the opportunity to identify different aspects of culture shown in pictures.*

### Springboard

▸ Students should have completed **Reading 1 - Oral Literature**, and *The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic* prior to this lesson.

In our society we have an image of culture. It could be food, dress, music, language, religion, television shows, etc.

- What do you think are aspects of our societies' culture?
- What are some aspects of culture as seen in some modern day T.V. shows?
- How are these answers similar to or different from the ones in your Communication Arts class?

### Procedure

▸ Break up class into groups of three or four students.

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 1: Using Images to Create a Story**. Each group will discuss (a) what are the aspects of culture in the pictures, (b) what should be included in a beginning, middle, an ending of a story.

Class returns to individual work. Students will use the images to create a story.

### Summary

Students read their story to another person. Students explain (a) choices they made in images and (b) the technique they chose to use.

# What is the Role of the Visual Arts in Storytelling?

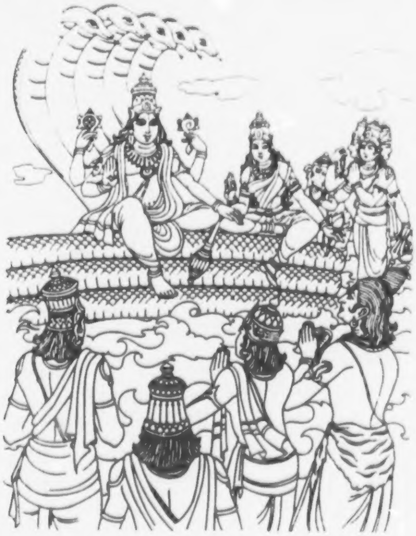
## Worksheet 1: Using Images to Create a Story

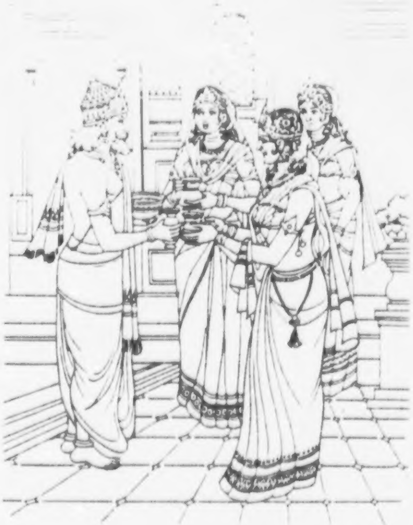
*(Picture are reprinted by permission from* ***The Picture Book Ramayana****, by Daniel H. Smith, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1980, pp.5,7,11,17,75,127)*

Pictures very often give the viewer an idea about the culture of a people. You are going to develop a story that illustrates Indian culture based on the pictures below.

1) Look at the pictures in group 1 and begin a story based on one or both of the pictures. *(Hint: Notice what is going on in the picture, what the people are wearing, the background, or anything that you feel is important to include.)*

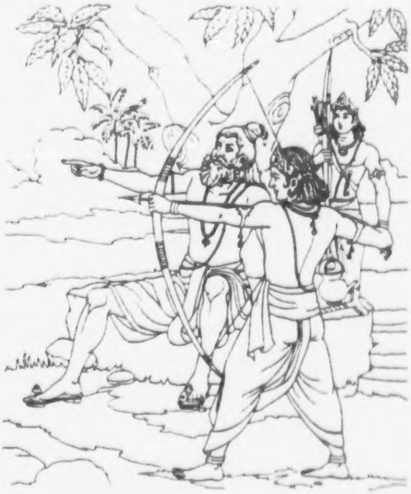
**Group 1**

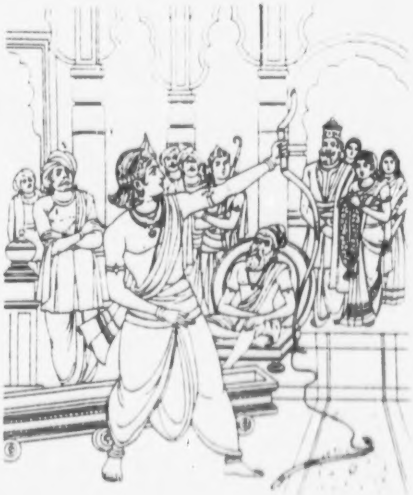




2) Look at the pictures in group 2 and write the next part of your story based on one or both of the pictures. ***(Remember you are continuing the same story as above.)***

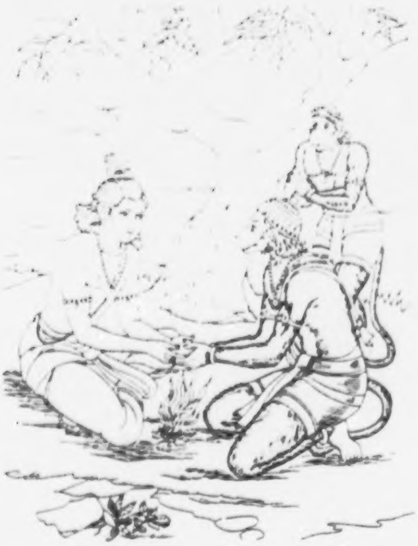
**Group 2**

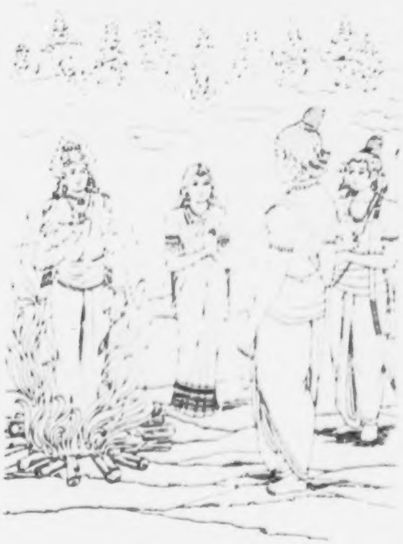




3) Look at the pictures in group 3 and write an ending to your story based on one or both of the pictures. *(Remember this is the ending of your story reread it to be sure it includes all the parts you want.)*

**Group 3**





**Summary:** Tell your story to another person. The listener should tell you: what they liked, what was not clear, and what they would like to know. Turn in all stories.

## UNIT 1, LESSON 5

**Focus Question: How can Oral and/or Written Literature Give us an "Insight" into a Culture?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- identify cultural values that they share with India and others that are unique to each culture.
- assess which values are more critical in the understanding of culture.
- express an appreciation and respect for cultural differences.

### Teacher Background

*Seeing through another's eyes is always difficult. We bring along our prejudices and point of view. It is important to assist our students to develop a sense of cultural relativism. They must learn to see other peoples not through their own lenses but through the lenses of that country. In this lesson students will begin to develop a respect for other cultures by seeing the similarities and differences with their own.*

### Springboard

Stories are very powerful because they tell how we feel, think and act. Students will retell some story that they feel represents them as a person or as a member of this society.

- What are the differences and similarities in these stories?
- What do they tell you about a person?

### Procedure

Epics set ideals for people to follow. The *Ramayana* sets up guidelines for people to live their lives. Stories can give you an idea of a people's culture and what they value. Cultures may share some values and also have some values that are different.

- In groups, students will select a part of the *Ramayana*. In each segment, students will show two ways culture is defined. *(Hint: culture can mean religion, value systems, laws, art, music, rituals, education, clothing, food, language etc,)*

- Return stories written in class the day before. Teachers place organizer on chalkboard, **Stories Old and New**. Students complete Part A of Chart; they reread their stories to complete Part B.

Graphic Organizer: Stories Old and New

| The Ramayana | Your Story |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

- Students respond to questions:
  - How are the two stories the same?
  - How are the two stories different?
  - How does each story reflect its culture?

**Summary**

- As a Class Activity, have students share work with class and create a list of cultural features that the entire class can agree with.

- For homework have students begin to think about the performance improvisation assignment of the *Ramayana* in **UNIT 1, LESSON 2**. The Social Studies assignment is to represent the Ramanyana in another way. For example a poster advertising the play, a commercial for T.V., a mural, a diorama, foods served during the presentation, etc.

## UNIT 1, LESSON 6

### Focus Question: How Does Performance Illustrate a Culture?

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:**

- identify aspects of culture in Indian society.
- explore ways to illustrate culture in mediums other than the written word.
- show how illustration helps us evaluate/assess the Indian way of life.

### Teacher Background

*Today's students are ethnically and educationally more diverse than ever before. Therefore, as educators we must alter the way we educate our students. In addition, to the written word we must engage our students' senses.*

*India is a visual culture with rituals playing an important part of their culture. Ritual observances make full use of all senses; seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, and hearing. In Hindu worship; mantras are sung, bells are rung, sacred liquid is drunk, consecrated food is eaten, flowers are presented etc.*

*This is a culminating activity that incorporates the visual and written in order to truly understand the Indian culture. It allows for different learning styles and makes all students feel as if their contribution is worthwhile and necessary. In addition, when students reconceptualize material they better incorporate it into their knowledge base.*

### Springboard

- Students will respond to following questions.
  - We all like different forms of expression in our culture. How is each one an example of cultural identity?
  - What kinds of artistic/sensory experiences do you enjoy and why? (theater, music, dance, etc.) Explain your answer.

### Procedure

- Based upon the springboard activity, elicit the idea that we can learn about a culture by ways other than the written word. Through a brainstorming activity, develop a list of ways one can illustrate Indian culture other than writing.

- Help students in groups or working individually to identify a project they would like to develop. Distribute Worksheets 1-7 appropriate to students/group interest. **Worksheet 1: Collage; Worksheet 2: Mithila; Worksheet 3: Mehndi Hand Decorating; Worksheet 4: Rangoli or Mandna Floor Painting; Worksheet 5: Masks; Worksheet 6: Costumes; Worksheet 7: Puppets**. In addition to a visual students should submit a written explanation of their visual.

### Summary

- As a class activity or homework assignment, have students create a Dual Cultural Picture. Use the Indian art forms from the worksheets and find similar or contrasting examples of these art forms in the United States. Examples include:

| INDIA | UNITED STATES |
|---|---|
| Mehndi hand decoration | veils, jewelry, nail polish, hairstyles - men and women, hats, skin piercing, tattoo art |
| Rangoli or Mandna floor painting | Pennsylvania Dutch tiles, symbols, wall paper, linoleum, stenciling, murals, wreaths |

▸ Students will illustrate Dual Cultural Pictures by using drawings, magazine clipouts, postcards, photographs, etc. Students may need to research these Indian art forms further to fully understand their roles relating to culture, social status, gender, etc.

## How Does Performance Illustrate a Culture?

### Worksheet 1: COLLAGE

*(all following worksheets and designs are taken from The Living Arts of India. Kate Rinzler. Smithsonian Institute and the United Nations Children's Fund. pp. 45-59)*

A collage is a poster with many pictures that represents thoughts, ideas, facts, information, etc. The pictures can be organized in any manner depending on what the artist feels is the best way to get his/her message to the public.

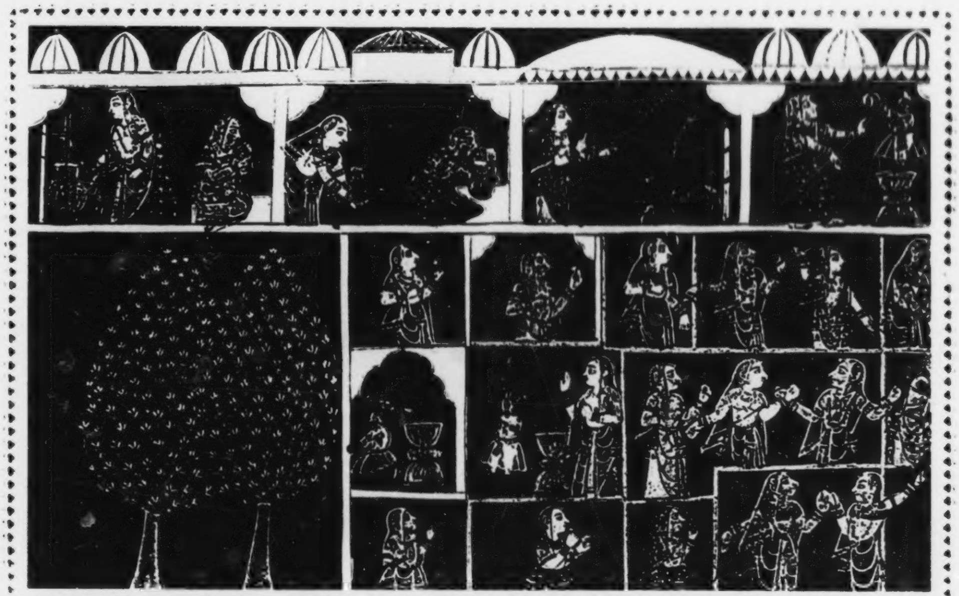
### Assignment

1) Create a collage illustrating some aspect of Indian culture. This collage can also be an advertisement for the play in lesson: Oral Literature: What is the Role of Storytelling?
2) Write a short paper explaining your collage.

    - What does it represent?
    - Why did you chose the pictures?
    - Why did you chose the format? (the importance of color. etc.)

### Materials

1) Poster paper
2) Magic markers
3) Scissors
4) Glue
5) Magazines
6) Travel brochures



## Worksheet 2: MITHILA

*(Pictures reprinted by permission from ADITI: The Living Arts of India, Kate Rinzler, published on the occasion of the exhibition, Aditi - A Celebration of Life, organized for the Festival of India 1985-86 at the Thomas M. Evans Gallery of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1985.)*

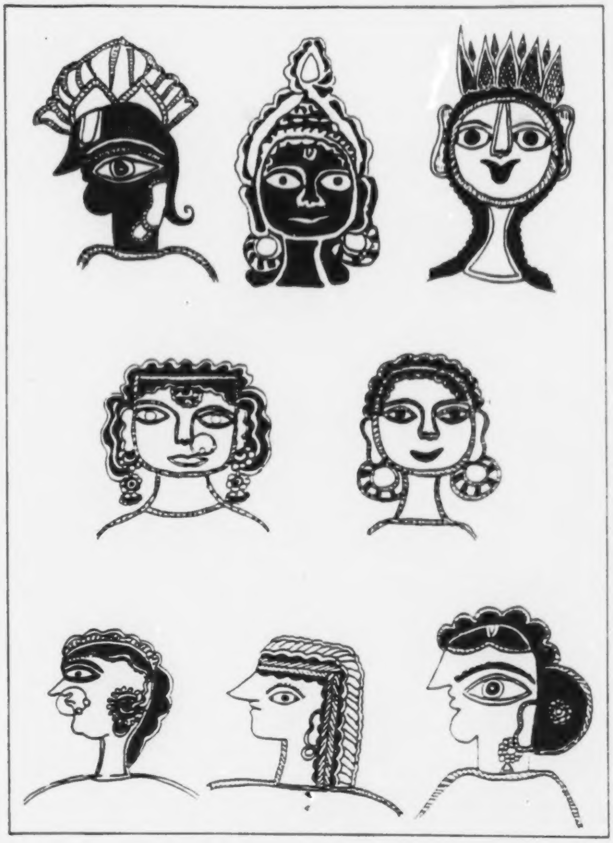
Mithila painting is a mural tradition, historically employed by women to decorate the walls of their homes for important religious occasions and secular events as marriages and festivals. Mural painting is a group activity in which a primary artist outlines the design and the other women and girls fill in decorative motifs and colors. Themes are often drawn from tales such as the Ramayana. Traditionally the women used neutral colors but today use bright colors.

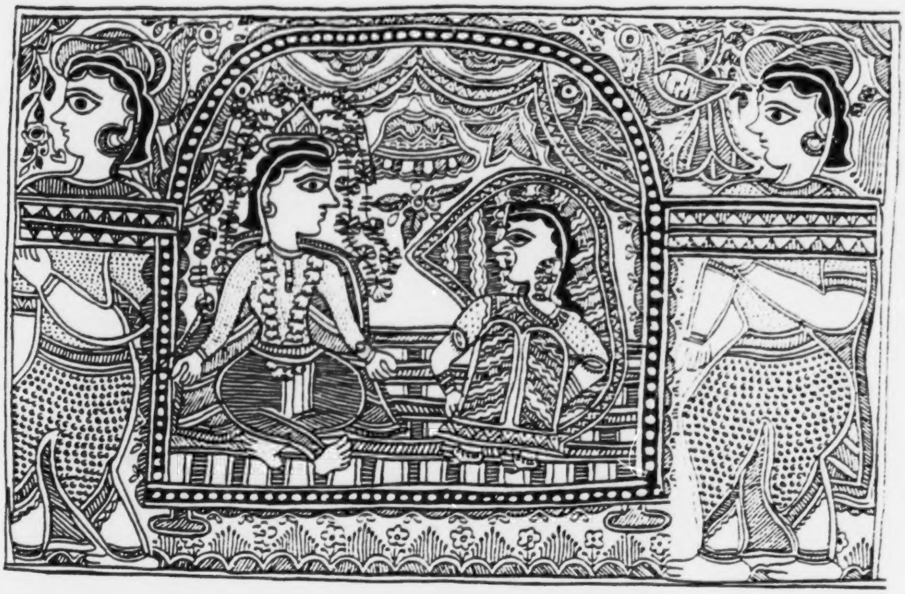
### Assignment

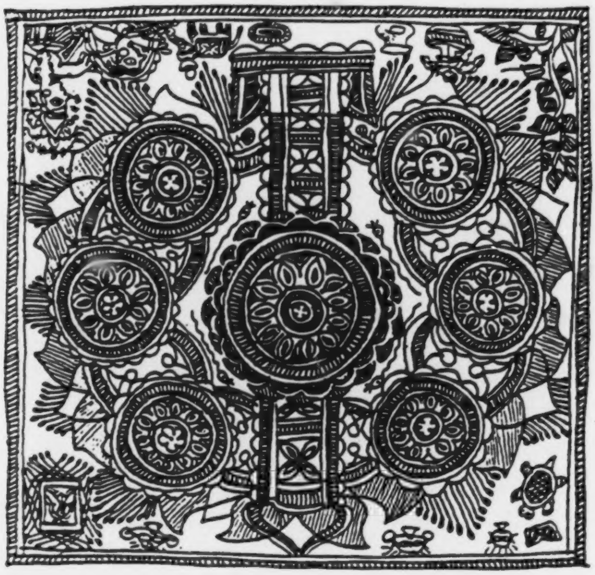
1) With the help of the handouts, create a Mithila mural for a scene in the Ramayana.
2) Mithila mural painting is a woman's art form. Explain how these factors have influenced its creation.
    a) Religious history
    b) Environment
    c) Festivals and rites

### Materials

1) Art paper
2) Black thin line magic markers
3) Colored markers







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## Worksheet 3: Mehndi Hand Decorating

*(Pictures reprinted by permission from ADITI: The Living Arts of India, Kate Rinzler, published on the occasion of the exhibition, Aditi - A Celebration of Life, organized for the Festival of India 1985-86 at the Thomas M. Evans Gallery of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1985.)*

Mehndi hand decoration is decorating a woman's hands with henna. Women often decorate their own hands however, it is symbolic of being loved within a home when it is applied by a mother, sister, or mother-in-law. Mehndi designing is considered a women's art. Mehndi is particularly symbolic of the love between man and wife, boy and girl.

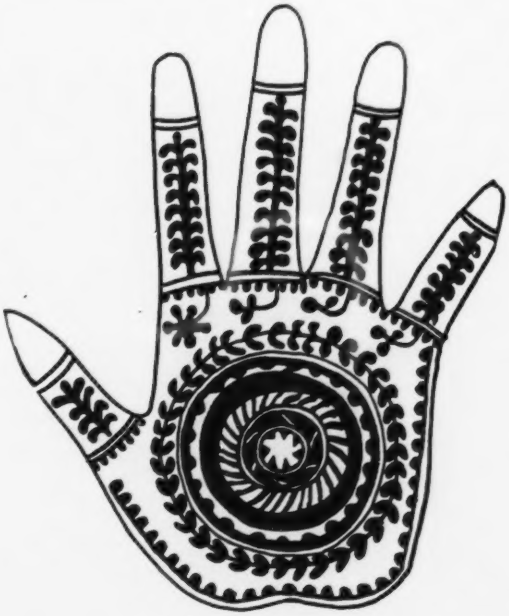
### Assignment

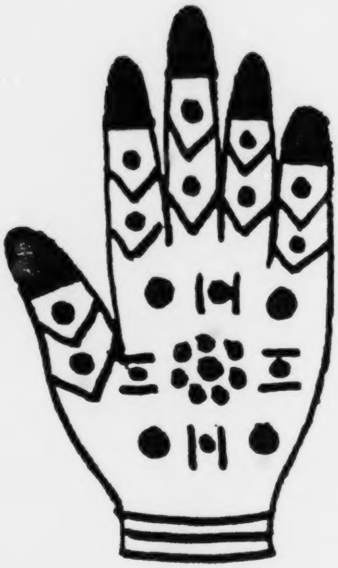
1) Create a Mehndi design on paper as shown in the hand outs. Be sure the design represents something you want to explain aloud.
2) If you would like to apply the design to your hands in the traditional Indian manner by mixing equal amounts of henna and water. Let the design set for about a half an hour and then wash off. The design will last for two to three weeks. Or you can decorate your hands with colored markers or food coloring and cotton tips.
3) Write a short explanation of why you selected that design and apply it to Indian culture.

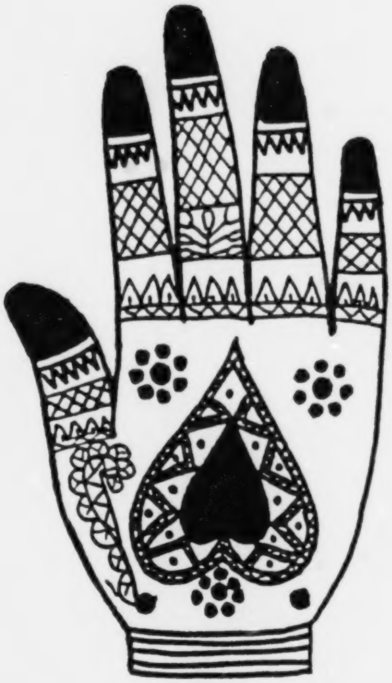
### Materials

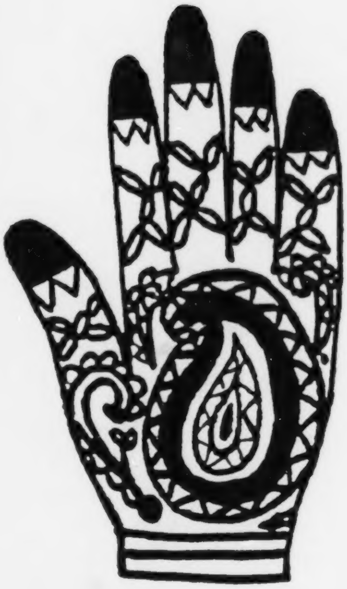
1) Art Paper
2) Black thin point magic marker
3) Henna*
4) Water

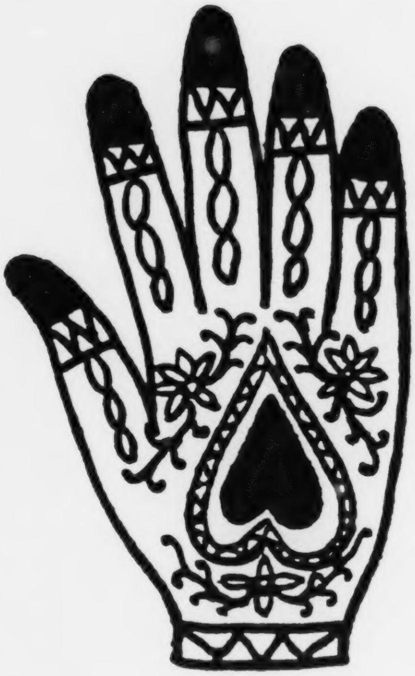
*(Henna can be found in many beauty stores and pharmacies, as well as at natural food shops that carry beauty supplies)

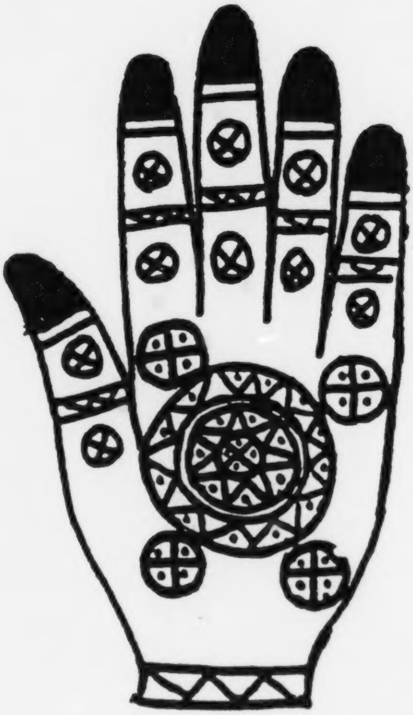












## Worksheet 4: Rangoli or Mandna Floor Painting

*(Pictures reprinted by permission from ADITI: The Living Arts of India, Kate Rinzler, published on the occasion of the exhibition, Aditi - A Celebration of Life, organized for the Festival of India 1985-86 at the Thomas M. Evans Gallery of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1985.)*

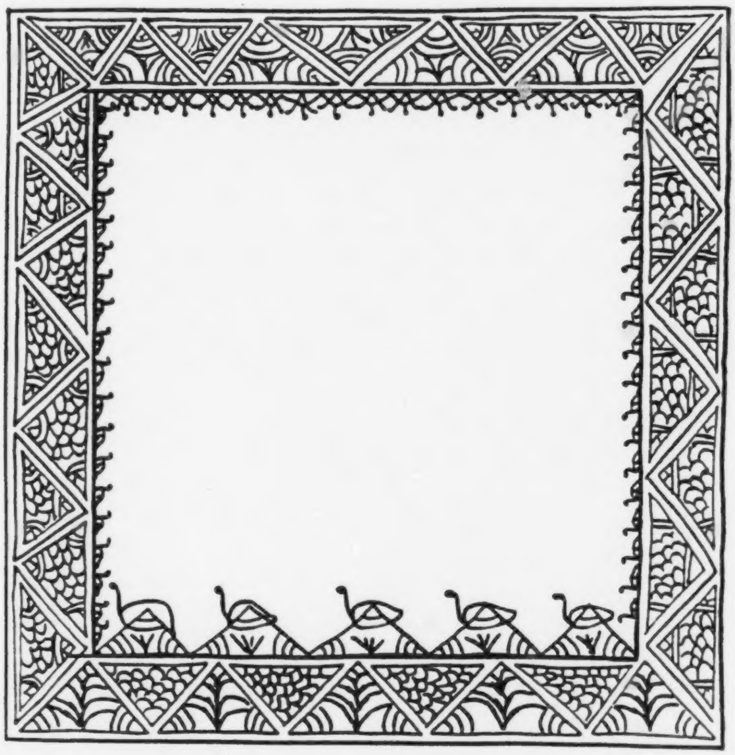
Rangoli is a ritual floor painting tradition which may be used on almost any floor surface in front of a house to create auspicious symbols. When used on the doorstep it is intended to welcome visitors and gods and goddesses. The floor design included in this packet are from Rajisthan, where they are called Mandna. (See also UNIT 14, lesson 1-4)

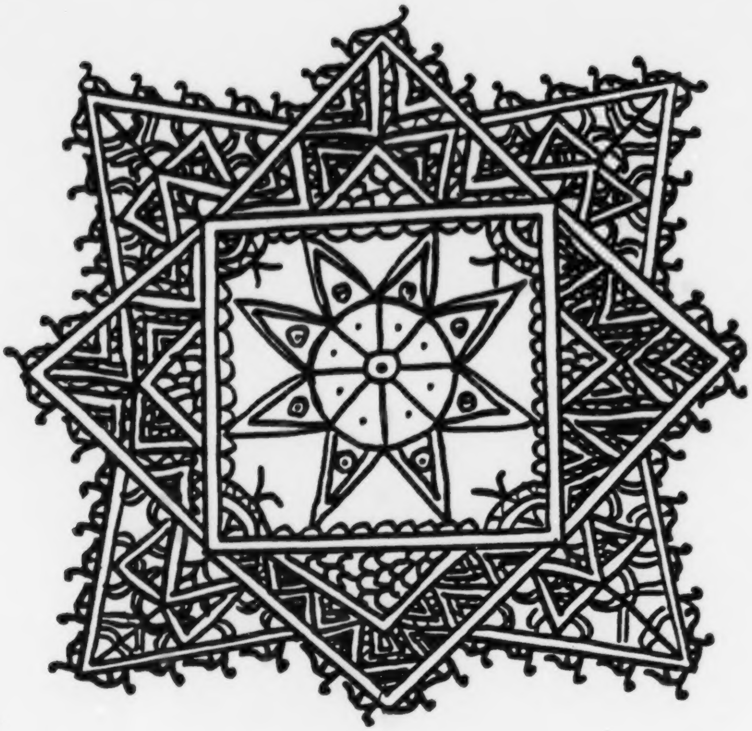
### Assignment

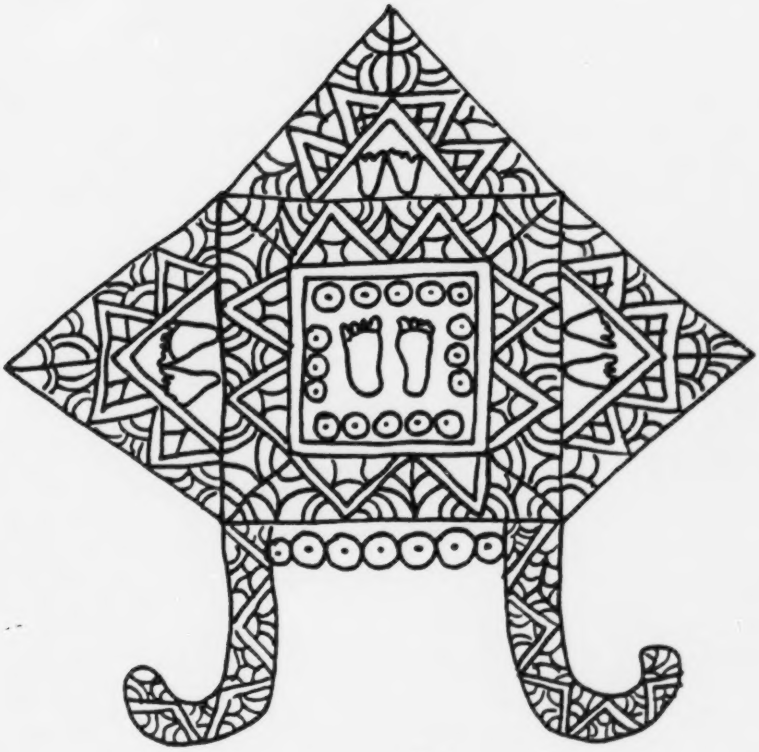
1) Create a floor design on paper that will give good luck to the English classes when they produce their play of the Ramayana.
2) Write a short explanation of your designs and explain why they will bring good luck to the students in the Ramayana play.

### Materials

1) Poster paper
2) Magic markers
3) Paint
4) chalk can be used to decorate school walks







## Worksheet 5: Masks

*(Ramayana Mask designs are reprinted courtesy of Thompson Press)*

Masks, or face paints, are used by many cultures for many reasons. They can portray different characters, be used in sacred ceremonies, for carnivals, in parades, to hide the identity of a wearer, in sports, etc. Regardless of the culture whenever masks are used there is a reason for their use.

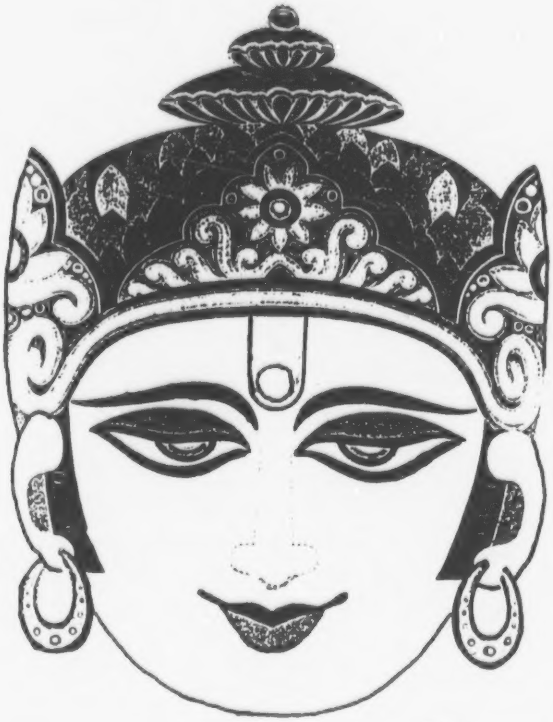
### Assignment

1) Create masks for the performance of the Ramayana in lesson on Oral Literature. You may use the samples provided or create original designs.
2) Research and write a short paper that includes the meaning of the masks, its use, history, importance of color etc.
3) Compare and contrast the use of masks in the Ramayana performance with Native American/African/European traditions of mask wearing.

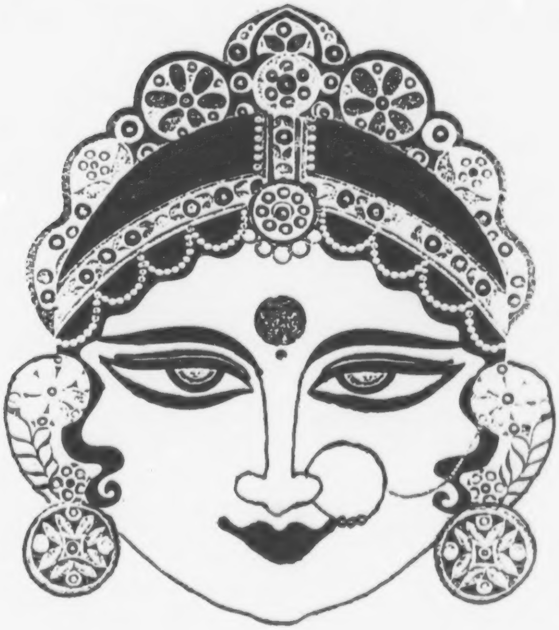
### Materials

1) Poster paper
2) magic markers (assorted colors)
3) scissors
4) glue
5) tissue paper
6) glitter
7) string

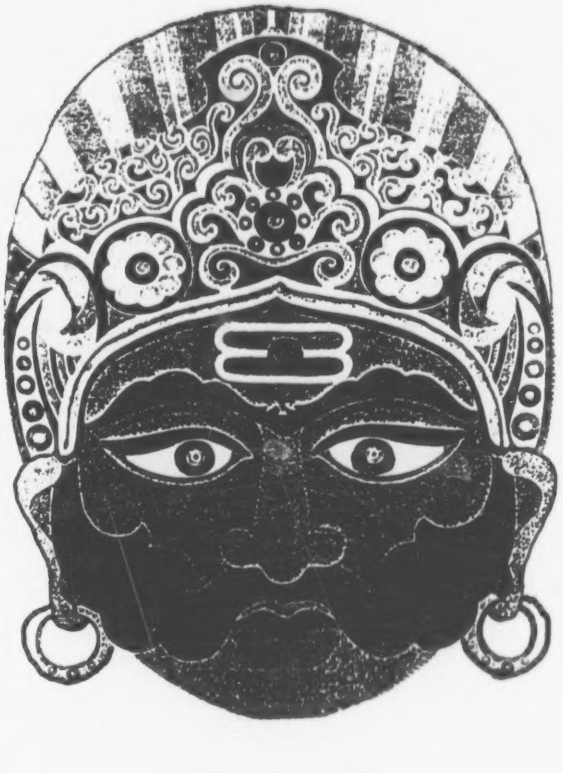
**Rama**



Sita



Ravana



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## Worksheet 6: Costumes

*(Costume designs are from the Children's Coloring Book. Commonwealth Institute London. an Air India Exhibit)*

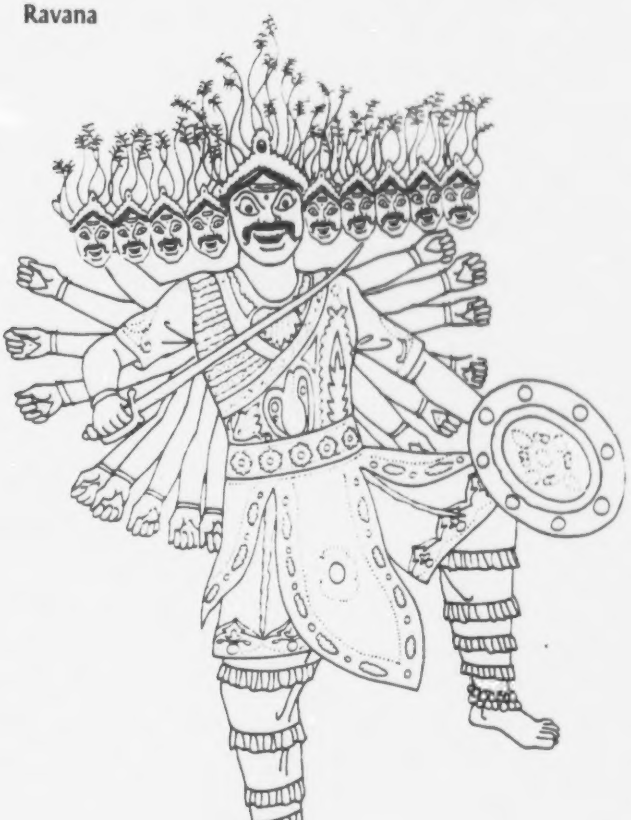
Costumes, like masks, are used by many cultures for many reasons. They can portray different characters, used in sacred ceremonies, for carnivals, in parades, to hide the identity of a wearer, in sports, etc. Regardless of the culture whenever costumes are used there is a reason for their use.

Assignment
1) Create a costume for the performance of the Ramayana in lesson on Oral Literature. You may use the samples provided or create original designs.
2) Research and write a short paper that includes the meaning of the costume, its use, history, importance of color, etc.
3) Compare and contrast the wearing of costumes at Halloween of Native American/African traditions with costume wearing for performances, whether the Ramayana or the opera or the school play.

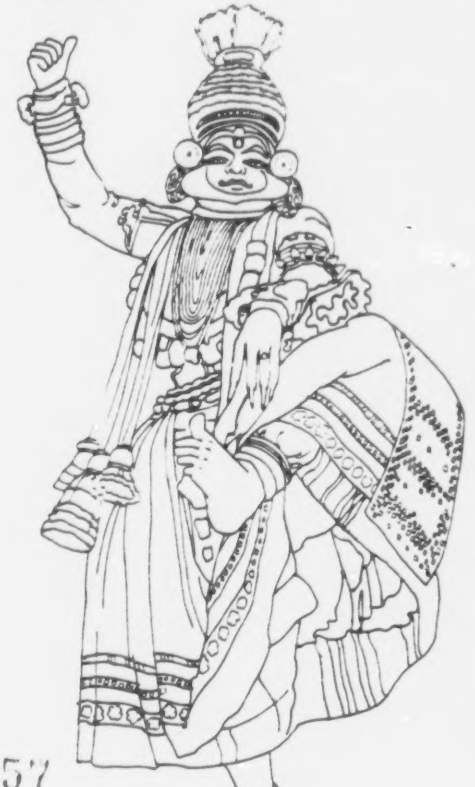
(In order to get ideas for costumes, students may want to view the Spotlight on Ramayana Video, either Part I, the Rama Story, or Part II, performances of the Ramayana.)

**Materials**
1) Poster paper
6) Glitter
4) Glue
5) Tissue paper
3) Scissors
8) Material
2) Magic markers (assorted colors)
7) String, Needle and Thread

**Ravana**



**Krishna**



## Worksheet 7: Puppets

*(Puppet visuals are from Darpana Academy by Kate Rinzler, N.Y.U. Asian Studies Curriculum Center Dr Mel Helstein Phd.)*

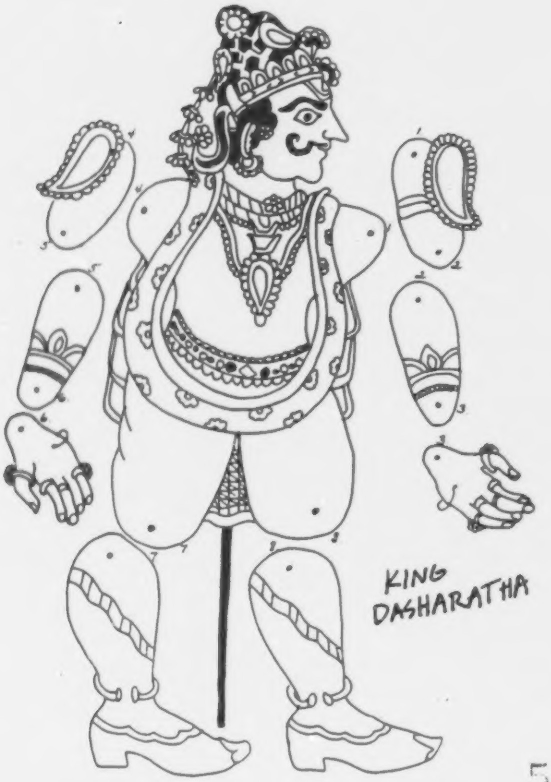
Puppets have been used in many cultures as a form of entertainment. In the United States, puppet shows have been graded to children. However, in other societies puppet shows are for all ages.

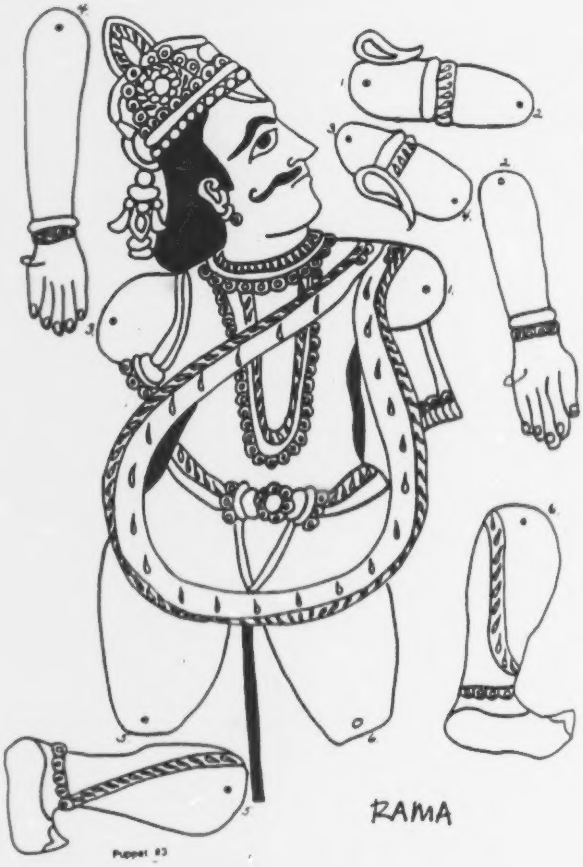
### Assignment

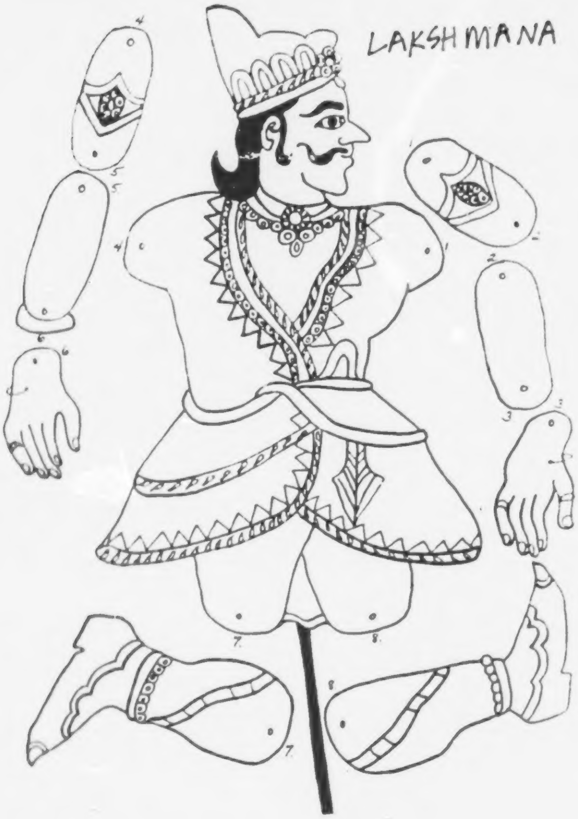
1) Put together a scene from the Ramayana to be performed by puppets. You may choose to use the puppet outlines provided or create your own. (The script with UNIT 6, lessons 1-4 for a puppet show may be used.)
2) Research and write a short paper explaining the use of puppets in the theater tradition. In addition, explain the characters and why you created them as you did.

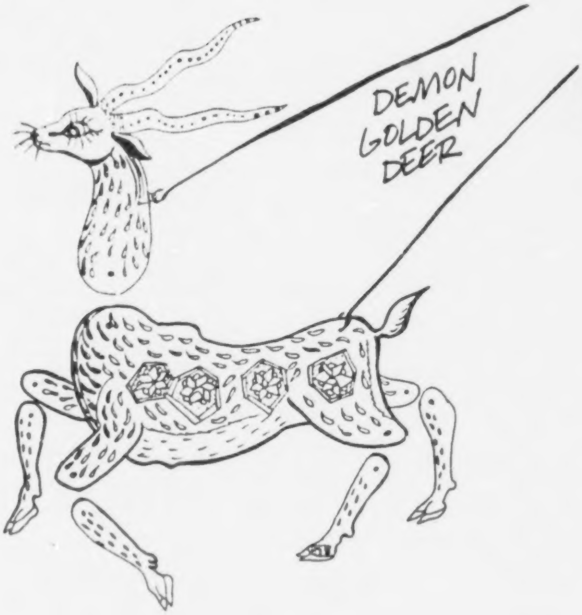
### Materials Needed

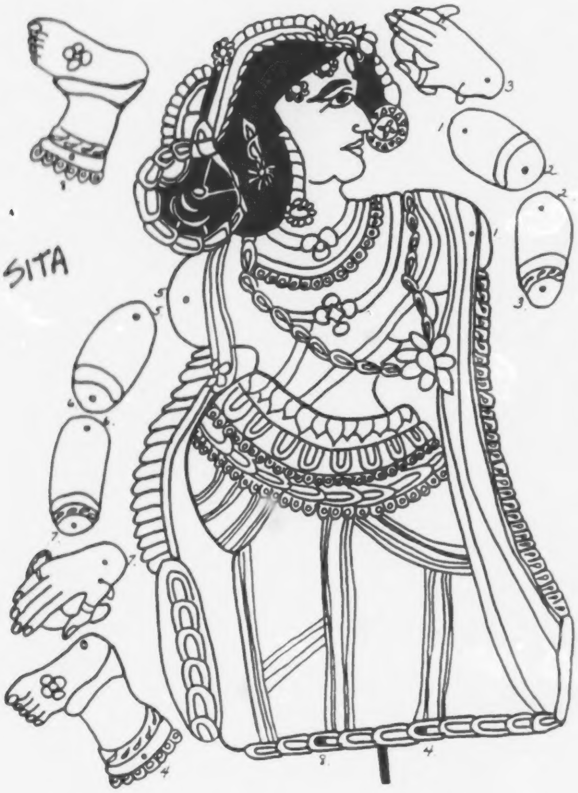
1) Poster paper
2) Magic markers
3) Glue
4) Glitter
5) Scissors
6) Tape
7) Paper fasteners

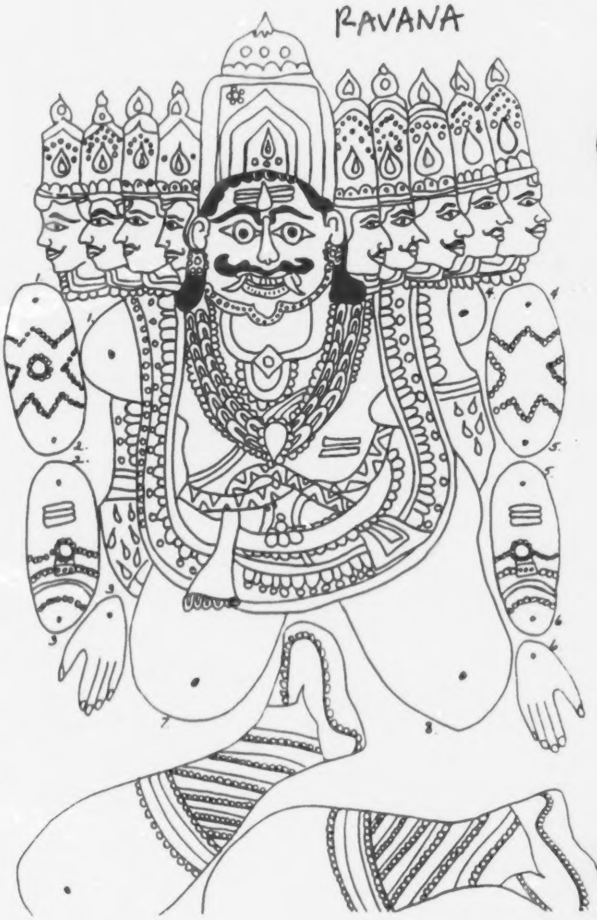


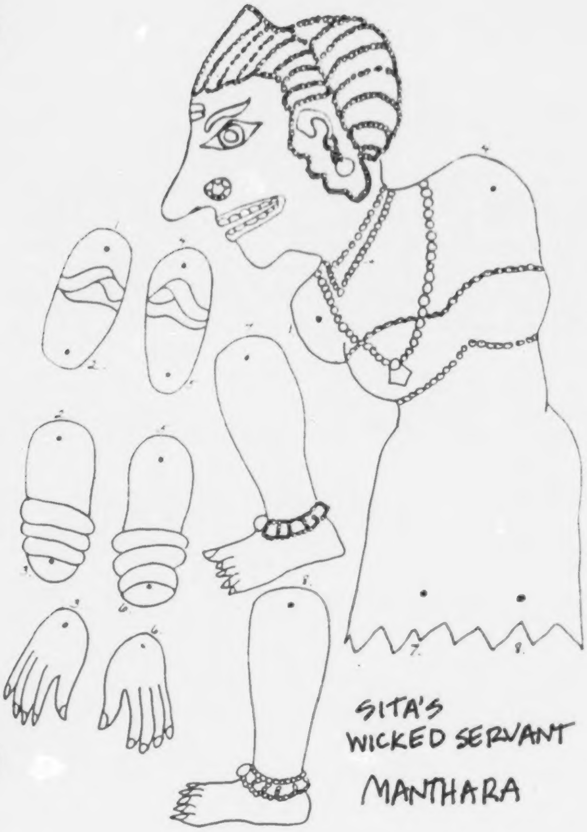



LAKSHMANA


DEMON
GOLDEN
DEER

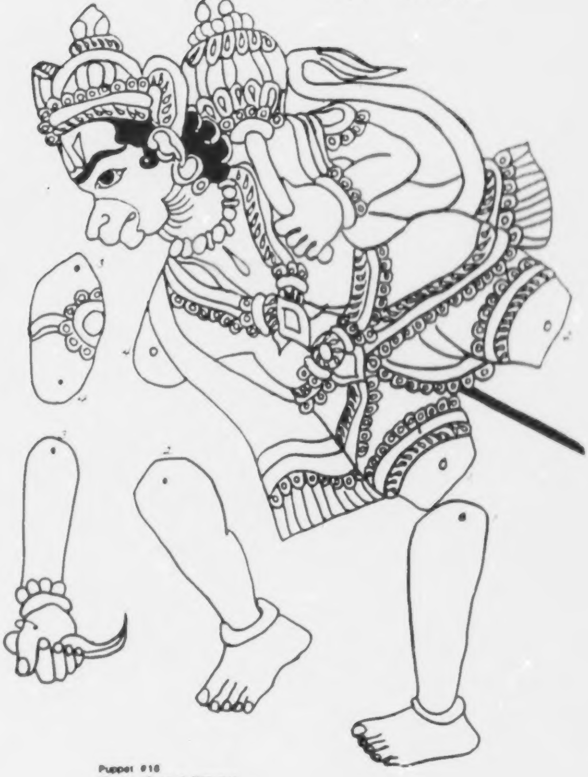

SITA


RAVANA

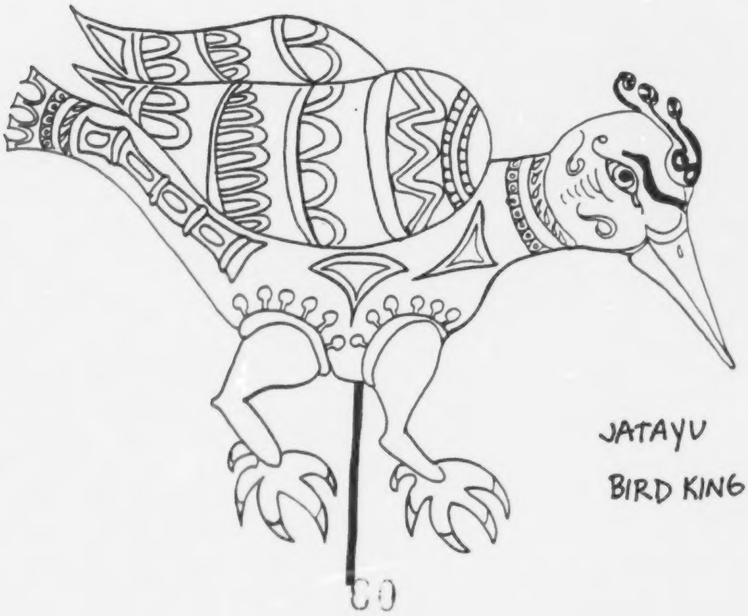


SITA'S
WICKED SERVANT
MANTHARA

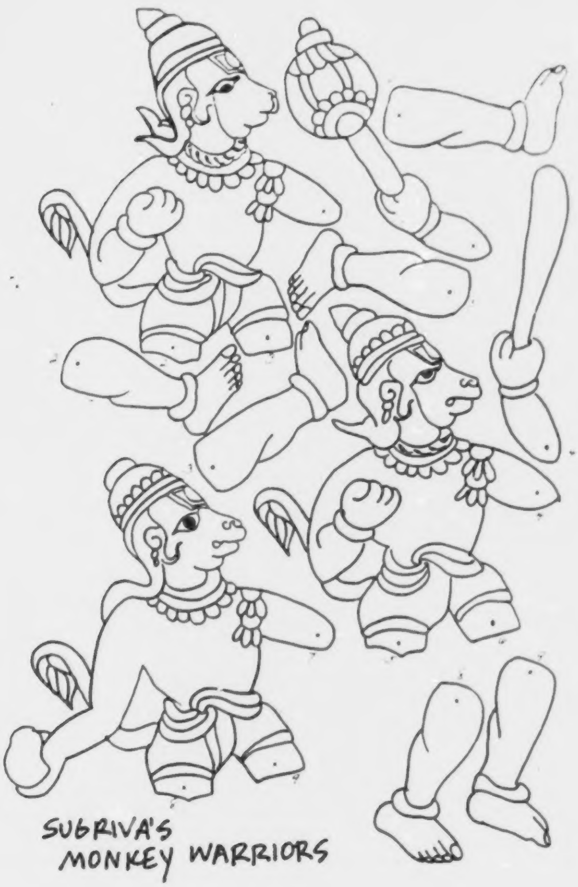
HANUMAN



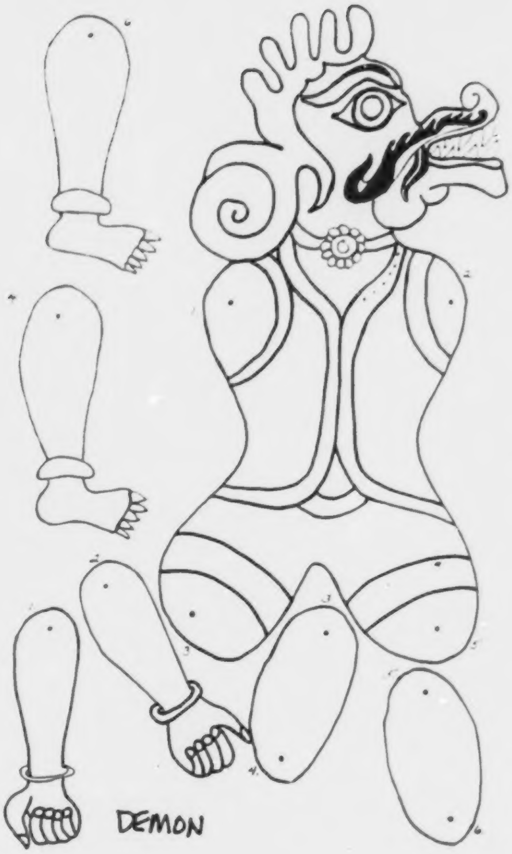
Puppet #18
Monkey General Hanuman



JATAYU
BIRD KING

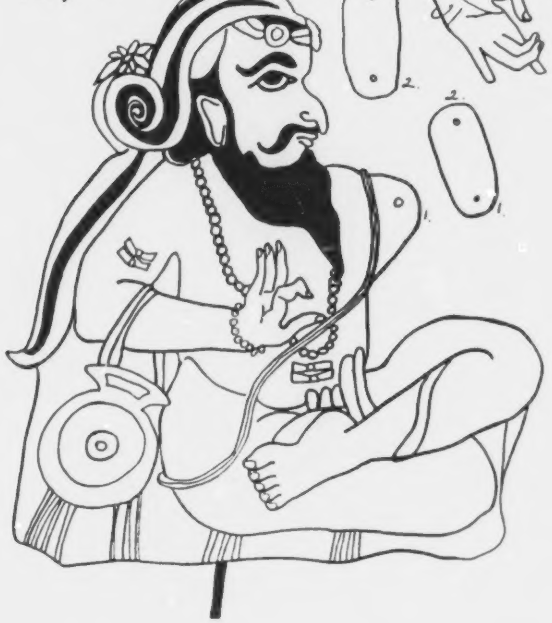


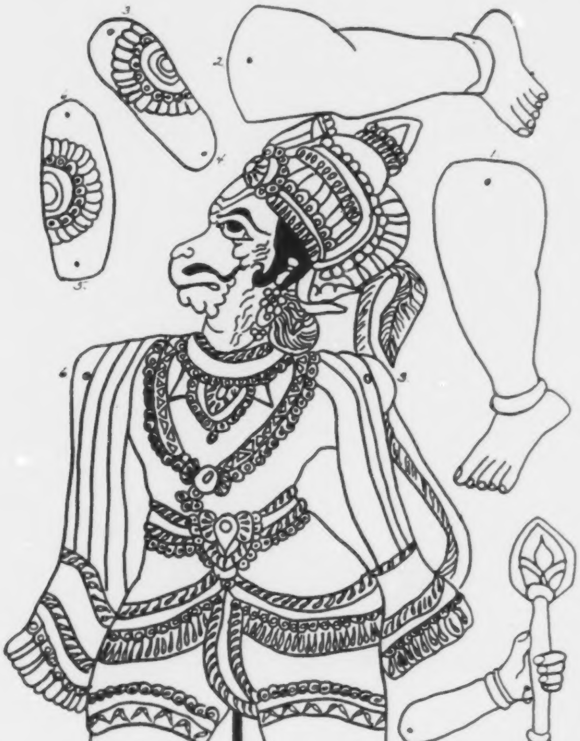
SUGRIVA'S
MONKEY WARRIORS



DEMON

RISHI VISHWAMITRA
HOLY MAN





SUGRIVA
MONKEY KING

# Teaching the Ramayana as Literature UNIT 2

**Objectives**

- discuss the *Ramayana* as literature examining various Indian motifs and literary devices.
- explore philosophical Hindu values and ideals and compare and contrast them with Western values and ideals by using thematic lessons.
- appreciate the prose and poetry of the Ramayana; compare it to Western prose and poetry.
- use *Ramayana* as a lens to study a particular culture.
- introduce students to the idea of epic.

## Suggested Themes and Literary Devices

### A. TRAGIC FIGURES (from the Western vantage point...)

- Rama can be seen as a tragic hero because ultimately he loses Sita. He must choose between being a good king or devoted husband. Essentially, he is in a no win situation.

- Ravana can also be seen as a tragic hero because his overwhelming love for Sita forces him to lose his life and his kingdom. Even though he abducts Sita, he never physically rapes her.

### B. THEMES

- *Kings rule by example.* "As the king is, so are his subjects." i.e., Rama is obsessed with setting good examples as King. His need to be a good king exceeds his need to be a good husband.

- *Society is more important than the individual.* Epics are often produced in periods when a society begins to codify values and behaviors. When Rama places the people of Ayodhya above his wife, he is abdicating individual needs for societal stability. In the *Ramayana*, the central relationship of Rama and Lakshman exemplifies the importance of the joint family.

- *An epic hero must undergo suffering.* Rama takes on suffering as part of his exile. He makes an epic journey through the forest. Analogies can be made to Christ and Odysseus' journeys.

- *Fate/Destiny (Karma).* Are we simply puppets controlled by our past actions or do we have some control in this life over our own destinies?

- *Filial Respect* - It is one's dharma to respect and honor the wishes of one's parents.

- *Separation and Sorrow* - separation from one's loved one and the consequent sorrow.

### C. SYMBOLS

*Rama*- reveals nature of God exemplifying moral authority beyond ordinary standards. He symbolizes justice, authority and power.

*Bharatha* - symbolizes prosperity and wealth

*Lakshman* - symbolizes a denial of sexuality, because he represses his sexuality (leaves his wife for Rama and never looks beyond Sita's anklet). He symbolizes the ideal younger brother.

*Hanuman* - symbolizes the perfect servant. He has unconditional devotion to God (Rama)

*Sita* - perfection of chastity and virtue. She is the ideal wife.

*Surpanakha* - symbolizes evil temptress (one who seduces)

*Ravana* - symbolizes the opposing force or opposition to dharma

### D. METAPHORS/SIMILES

- Surpanakha is compared to a serpent.
- Hanuman is a metaphor for our low human state.

### E. HYPERBOLE AND IRONY

### F. THE *RAMAYANA* AS ORAL/WRITTEN TRADITION

Teachers should review Teacher Background sections from UNIT 1, lessons 1-3.

## UNIT 2, LESSON 1- Introduction to chapter 1

**Focus Question: How Can Reading Aloud Give us a Sense of the Author's Voice?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- list and discuss *elements* of folklore and epics.
- provide an introduction to The Ramayana.
- explain the extent to which the narrative pervades Indian culture by displaying Indian art and discussing the T.V. *Ramayana.*

### Teacher Background

*The Ramayana is a tale known throughout India as well as across South and Southeast Asia. It is presented in many forms --long epic poems, popular folk tales, song and mime, traditional dramatic re-enactments on stage and street, dance recitals, rituals of worship and of pilgrimage, sculptures and paintings, even puppet shows, TV serials and comic books -- hence its characters and incidents are well known tohundreds of millions of Asians. For many, the story is an allegory of the life of the spirit as it journeys through this world, so for them it serves also as a religious guide. Indeed, one version of the Rama-story is referred to as "the Bible of North India." The Ramayana is a wide-ranging story of an epic nature, like Homer's Iliad or Virgil's Aeneid. The Ramayana is more than that; for many Hindus it is a sacred text, as important to them as the Bible is to Christians and Jews. Your discovery of The Ramayana as epic, as mythology and as a sacred text will be an important part of the adventure in store for you.*

### Springboard

▹ Students are asked to name their favorite folk stories. The teacher will record student responses on the board eliciting various elements of folklore and epics.

### Procedure

### I. ELEMENTS OF FOLKTALE AND EPICS IN WESTERN SOCIETY

- hero and heroine (beautiful princess/handsome prince)
- romantic love
- individualism
- evil woman or man as opposing force ( anti- hero)
- prince must show his valor by fighting for truth and justice as well as for the princess

### II. INTRODUCTION TO THE *RAMAYANA*

Today we are going to begin reading an ancient classic from South Asia, The *Ramayana*. In many ways, it is like the folktales we have been discussing, but in many ways it is also very different.

A. **What is the Ramayana?** Teacher will place the following information on chalkboard:

- It is ancient, Indian folk story that has been kept alive for over 2,000 years
- It is told in at least 10 different languages.
- It was told orally before it was written, and continues to be told and performed throughout India.
- Its purpose is two-fold.
    - popular entertainment
    - blueprint for right human conduct

63

- shows the ideal man, king, wife and son
- Hindus must strive towards this ideal
- one can only achieve the ideal by following dharma (one's duty)
- explains how eternal salvation can be reached only by doing what is right and virtuous.

- Based upon this information, how is *Ramayana* similar to other folktales? How is it different?

B. **Who are the major characters?** (Display pictures)
Teacher will go over pronunciation and read prologue aloud with class which will provide necessary details for a basic understanding of the story.

- Ram - incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Compare Hindu Trinity to Christian Trinity.) Explain how Ram is a paradigm of moral authority. He reveals the nature of God. Ram is used to explain dismay just like Jesus Christ. For example, people say, "Oh, Ram." "Oh Ram" were also Gandhi's last words. People worship all Hindu Gods. It is a polytheistic religion.

  Christianity - God (the father), Jesus (the son), and Holy Spirit
  Hinduism - Brahma (the creator), Shiva (the destroyer), and Vishnu (the preserver)

- Sita - incarnation of Lakshmi (goddess of prosperity and wealth who is married to Lord Vishnu).
- Hanuman - monkey with human features who is devoted servant to Ram

### Summary

▹ After reading the prologue, do a family chart of King Dasaratha's family to elucidate the familial relationship and have students begin writing in their journals asummary of what they have read so far.

### Homework

▹ Read chapter one and define the following words: austerities, savant, wry, secular, obeisance.
▹ Write a literature log on your reading in which you illustrate your understanding of what you read.

- Was there anything you did not understand?
- Was there anything you particularly liked?
- Can you draw parallels to Western folktales?

How Can Reading Aloud Give us a Sense of the Author's Voice?

Worksheet 1: Chapter 1 - The Ramayana

Directions: In your assigned group, either illustrate or act out each episode as it occurred in the story. You will have to assign roles and write dialogue if you choose not to draw. You may want to utilize the following questions as a guide.

① Thataka's story

- Who cursed Thataka's family and why?
- How did Rama destroy Thataka?

② Mahabali's story

- Who was Mahabali?
- How did Vishnu trick Mahabali?
- What became of Mahabali?

③ Ganga's story

- Why is the Ganges river sacred to India?
- Why is the "horse sacrifice" important?
- Why were Shiva and Ganga rivals?
- How did the Ganges river form?

④ Ahayla's story

- Who created Ahayla?
- Why did Brahma give her to sage Gautama?
- How did sage Gautama treat her?
- Which God was jealous and what action did he take?
- Did Ahayla deserve her punishment?
- How was Indra punished?
- How did Ram redeem Ahayla?
- How was Indira redeemed?

## UNIT, LESSON 2: Chapter One

### Focus Question: How can Illustrations and Role Playing Better Illuminate Rama's Initiation?

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define vocabulary crucial to an understanding of the text.
- discuss why "Rama's Initiation" is an appropriate title.
- explain why Rama must go on the journey.
- foster cooperative learning through group work.

### Teacher Background

*Rama must go on a journey to realize that he is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He must fulfil his dharma and combat evil in the world. His journey is analogous to Odysseus' journey in Greek Mythologyand Christ's journey in the New Testament.*

### Springboard

- What is an initiation?
- What initiations have you had in your lives? Explain.

### Procedure

- Teacher will go over vocabulary from lesson 1 with students. Then teacher will elicit answers to the following questions and place them on the board.

  - Who is sage Viswamithra? What did he want from King Dasaratha?
  - Why is King Dasaratha upset?
  - Based on the definition of an initiation, why must Rama go with sage Viswamithra?

The Ramayana is full of stories within a story. It has many transgressions and sub-plots. Rama realizes his strength three different times in chapter one: he slays Thataka; he sends the evil king Mahabali back to the netherworld; and he reunites Ahayla with Gautama. In this chapter, we also learn about the formation of the river Ganges.

- Teacher will hand out **Worksheet 1: Chapter 1 - Ramayana** and separate the students into groups. Each group will either draw comic strips (illustrate) or assign roles to members of the group to convey each episode or "initiation" to the class. Allow students the remainder of the period to work on their projects The following day the students present their work to the class.

### Summary

- All students will report on the progress of their projects to date.

### Homework

- Define the following words: affluence, ensnare, emissary, immolate, perverse
- Read chapter 2.
- Thinking Question: We have the handsome prince warding off evil. Who or what is missing? What does the title of chapter 2 suggest?

## UNIT 2, LESSON 3: Chapter 2

**Focus Question: How is The Ramayana Similar to Euro-American Literature?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define vocabulary crucial to the understanding of the text.
- draw similarities between Indian motifs and Western motifs.
- explain the use of foreshadowing citing how pervasively it is used in Western literature.

### Springboard

▹ The class will debate the following questions orally:

- How many of you believe in love at first sight?
- Do you think it is something you read only in fairy tales and see in the movies?

### Procedure

▹ Go over vocabulary from chapter 2. Then explain the importance of literary devices in literature. Discuss foreshadowing as a pervasive literary device in literature.

- Foreshadowing - hint of what is to come
  - a) the title "wedding"
  - b) bridegroom to be
  - c) imagery of festive city

- Describe the scene where Ram first lays eyes on Sita? (p 24) It is love at first sight.

- What stories can we compare it to in western literature?
  - (Cinderella, Romeo and Juliet and Aladdin)

- Who is Sita an incarnation of?
  - a) Lakshmi (goddess of love and prosperity) She and Ram were married in heaven

- What happens to Sita after she sees Ram?
  - a) She is restless and love sick

- What happens to Rama after he sees Sita?
  - a) He, too, is love sick.

- Who is Sita's real mother? (Mother Earth)

- Why wasn't Sita already married?

- Can we compare Ram's breaking of the bow with any incidents in Euro-American literature?
  - a) Odysseus' stringing the bow

## Summary

The teacher will refer to the aim: How is The Ramayana Similar to Western Folklore and Literature? The teacher will draw a chart on the board:

| East | West |
|---|---|
| prince | prince |
| princess | princess |
| prince wins princess | prince wins princess |
| love at first sight | love at first sight |
| long journey | long journey |

## Homework

- Read chapter 3. Define vocabulary from chapter 3. Write a literature log illustrating your understanding of the story.

- Use the vocabulary in proper context in a sentence. Then provide at least one simile and one antonym for each word.

## Worksheet 2: Chapter Three: Quiz on Reading

**Directions**: In clear, concise sentences, using your knowledge of sharma and filial respect, answer each of the following questions. (10 points each)

1. What is the major conflict in Chapter 3?

2. How did Kooni persuade Queen Kaikeyi to listen?

3. How does Queen Kaikeyi get King Dasaratha to make Bharatha king?

4. How did the king know something was wrong?

5. What does Kaikeyi ask for?

6. Why can't King Dasaratha refuse Kaikeyi?

7. Why does Ram agree to go to the forest without question?

8. Why do Sita and Lakshmana agree to go with Rama?

9. What happens to the king?

10. How does Bharatha react when he hears he is king?

## UNIT 2, LESSON 4: Chapter 3

**Focus Question: Why Does Rama Agree to Leave Ayodya and Stay in Exile for Fourteen Years Without Question?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define vocabulary crucial to an understanding of the text.
- identify first major conflict (plot point) of the story.
- reveal the importance of dharma and honor.
- discuss the importance of honor and dharma.

### Teacher Background

*Chapter Three begins the first major conflict of the story and the plot begins to unfold.*

### Springboard

> "*A word given is like an arrow, it goes forward. You cannot recall it midway.*" - Rama

▹ Students will utilize this quote to answer the following question in their journals.

- Did you ever make a promise to someone? If so, was the promise kept? Why or why not?
- Or, did someone ever make a promise to you that was not kept? How did you feel?

The teacher will allow students 5 to 10 minutes to answer the questionin their journals and then share journals emphasizing active listening.

### Procedure

▹ The teacher will begin by defining vocabulary from chapter 3. Then in a question and answer session, the teacher will elicit answers to the following questions.

The major conflict in Chapter 3 deals with the succession to the throne.

- What is the role of each of the following characters: Kaikeyi, Bharata, King Dasaratha, Kooni, Rama?
- What method does Kaikeyi use to get her way in this conflict?
- How do Kaikeyi's actions sway the king?
- What request does Kaikeyi make?
- Why can't King Dasaratha refuse Kaikeyi?
- Why does Ram agree to go the decision without question?
- Why do Sita and Lakshama agree to go with Rama?
- How does Bharatha react when he hears he is king?

### Summary

King Dasaratha dies and Bharat begs Ram to return to Ayodhya.

- Why does Rama refuse?
- What values are exemplified by his decision?

70

- Do you agree with his decision? Why? Why not?
- What would you have done?

▹ Write a brief essay on whether or not Rama madethe right decision. In other words, should you obey your parents even if you believe what they ask you is not in your best interest?

**Homework**

▹ Read chapter 4 and define the following words: sojourn, idyllic, asuras, buoyed, acerbity rakshasas, sakhti.

▹ Use in proper sentence, then provide at least one synonym and one antonym for each word.

◆

## UNIT 2, LESSON 5: Chapter 4

### Focus Question: Is the Ramayana an Example of Male-Dominated Classical Literature?

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- define vocabulary that is crucial to the understanding of chapter four.
- utilize symbols
- compare and contrast the way women are portrayed in Indian epics with the way women are portrayed in Euro-American literature.
- explain *sakti* and how it contributes to an understanding of a female living in India.

### Teacher Background

*According to Indian culture, sakti (the energy that makes the universe move) is by nature female. Thus, the female is powerful. Sexual abstinence increases sakti. The woman must be chaste and virtuous in order to accrue sakti and transfer it to the man. Good females are controlled by nature. If the house doesn't prosper, it is the wife's fault.*

*But a woman must be still be controlled by her male kin - her father in childhood, her husband in adulthood and her son in old age.*

*The* ***Ramayana*** *is an example of male-dominated classical literature because it suggests that any woman who does not have an escort is impure or unchaste. Men must control their women and their power. Women's salvation depends upon their virtue and chastity as daughters and wives. Thus, Soorponaka can never achieve salvation. The ideal women are those like Sita who do not strive to break the bonds of control.*

### Springboard

There are two kinds of women: the kind you marry and the kind you date.

- What does the statement mean? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

### Procedure

- The teacher will begin by defining vocabulary from chapter 4.

  - Who is Kamvalli? (Ravana's sister) What is her real name? (Soorpanaka)
  - How is Soorpanaka a contrast to Sita?

- The teacher will divide the class in half. One side will focus on Soorpanaka while the other side will focus on Sita. Have the class debate who is the more virtuous person.

| **Soorpanaka** | **Sita** |
|---|---|
| comes unescorted in the forest | always escorted |
| makes an advance towards Ram | never any mention of sexual advances |
| p 71 "wild matted hair" | "ornaments and flowers" |
| evil temptress | pure, chaste and virtuous |

- Why doesn't Rama just tell her he has a wife? (Rama is flirting with her. He is as much of a man as he is a god.
- What becomes of Soorpanaka and why? (Lakshman mutilates her by cutting off her breasts, ears and nose. She wanted to destroy Sita.)
- How does Soorpanaka seek revenge?
- According to *Ramayana*, what happens to evil, loose women? (They are either mutilated or killed. )

**Summary**

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 3: Point of View Writing**. Students will take one of the roles and write an essay from that characters point of view.

**Homework**

▸ Read Chapter 5 and define vocabulary: perpetual, levity. eminence, innolate, obstinate, elusive, sagacity.

▸ Compare the way women are expected to behave in India with the way women are expected to behave in the United States.

- Are there really that many differences or are they, in actuality, quite similar?

▸ Write at least a three paragraph response in your journal to the question.

## Is the Ramayana an Example of Male-dominated Classical Literature?

### Worksheet 3: Point of View Writing

The purpose of point of view writing is to get into the thoughts and mind of the character you are portraying. Based on the character's actions and words, you must use your reasoning to tell us how the character might think and feel during a given situation.

### Directions

Pretend you are **one** of the following people and write a three paragraph point of view response.

**Rama:** You are torn between your dharma (which is to destroy Ravana) and your love and companionship (for Sita). At the same time, you see Kamavali, Ravana's sister, and you wish to have her as your own. Explain your inner conflict and longing.

**Lakshmana:** You are alone in the woods with no companion. Your dharma is to serve your brother and his wife unquestioningly and selflessly, but you too have human desires. Explain your inner conflicts and longings.

**Sita:** You realize your dharma is to serve your husband faithfully nut you want so much just to be alone with him and enjoy his companionship and love. You wish you did not have to be part of his mission to destroy evil. Explain your inner conflicts and longings.

**Soorpanaka:** You are passionately attracted to Rama, but your enormous height, wild matted hair and fang-like teeth make you unattractive. You are the type of women men do not want to marry, yet you yearn for love and companionship. Explain how you feel about being a Rakasha.

## UNIT 2, LESSON 6: Chapter 5

### Focus Question: Are Both Rama and Ravana Responsible for Their Own Fates (Kharma)?

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define vocabulary that is crucial to the understanding of chapter five
- compare and contrast the causes of western tragedies with the causes of eastern tragedies (hubris, envy, greed)
- explain kharma and how it contributes to and understanding of Hinduism

### Teacher Background

*Kharma from Sanskrit means "to do." Literally the word means "that which is done or action." The doctrine has for its basis the very popular notion that all action has its reaction, and that the type of reaction is casually connected to the type of action. Kharma is determined by the behavior of the individual in its previous worldly existence. In other words, we reap what we sow. Thus the question then arises, do we have control over our own fate if it is predetermined by our previous life? According to Hindu scholars, "The card in the game of life are given to us. We do not select them. They are traced to our past kharma, but we call as we please, lead what suit we will and as we play, we win or lose. And there is individual freedom - freedom of action. "*

### Springboard

In Greek mythology, tragedy is the result of someone's innate flaw, whether it be hubris, greed, lust or jealousy. The Greeks (West) like the Hindus (East) believe man has control over his fate.

- How many of you believe that you are the arbiter of your own destiny and that you have total control over the outcome of your life?
- Why do you believe that? Can you give examples of how that belief works in your life?
- How many of you believe that you have no control over your own life?
- Can you give examples of how that works in your life?

### Procedure

▸ The teacher will begin by defining vocabulary from chapter 5: hubris, myopic, passionate, arrogant, irrational, avaricious, jealous.

It is important to look at motivations in this chapter if we are going to analyze the question of control over one's fate.

- Why was Ravana such a successful ruler?
- How does Ravana react to Soorponaka description of Sita?
- What does Ravana decide to do?
- Who does he consult and what advice is he given?
- On what grounds does Ravana persuade Mareecha to help him?
- Do you think this is Ravana's real reason? If not, what is it?
- Why doesn't Ravana listen to Mareecha's words? What would you say about him and others who do not listen to others' advice?
- Contrast Ravana to Rama. Did he make the right decision going after the golden deer?

Why or why not? Who warned him?
- Why does Rama go?
- Why does Lakshmana leave Sita?
- How does Ravana carry Sita off? Why can't he touch her?
- Based upon these answers, do the characters in *Ramayana* have control over their own fate or is their fate controlled by outside forces? Prove your answer.

### Summary

Several significant questions emerge at this point and need to be addressed:

- Could Sita's abduction have been avoided? How?
- Could Ravana have avoided setting the events in place to meet his fate? How?

Students should debate whether we are simply puppets in the hands of the Gods or whether or not we have control over our own fates.

### Homework

▹ Read chapter 6 and define the following vocabulary: protruding, odious, annihilate, distraught, abdicate, rash, dissuaded.

▹ We all have a conception of God and a conception of the devil. Write a short paragraph explaining your conceptions of God and the devil.

* * *

## UNIT 2, LESSON 7: Chapter 6

**Focus Question: How is the Eastern Conception of Good and Evil Different from the Western Conception of Good and Evil?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to -**

- define vocabulary that is crucial to an understanding of chapter six.
- compare and contrast the western concept of good and evil with the eastern concept of good and evil.
- explain what transcendent means.

### Teacher Background

*In Western mythology and philosophy, we automatically refer to both God and the devil in duality. They are either all good or all bad, male or female, or mortal or immortal. There is compelling necessity to assign a language we can underhand to our deities; however, in Eastern philosophy, especially Hinduism, one does not understand the true meaning of God if one can only see in terms of black and white. God transcends duality. God is both mortal and immortal, male and female and benevolent, yet capable of making mistakes. This explains why R.K. Narayan states on page 94 of the text the following:*

> *that when "the perfect man takes a false step, it may be less an actual error of commission on his part than a lack of understanding on ours."*

### Springboard

- Call on students to read their responses to their homework. Notice how most of them, if not all of them, will see God as solely benevolent and the devil as solely evil. Discuss the duality that exists in Western philosophy.

### Procedure

- Was Rama all divine or was he partly human?
- How can we compare Rama and Jesus?
- Who is Hanuman?
- Who is Sugreeva?
- What does Vali have against his brother Sugreeva?
- Why does Vali not listen to his wife when Sugreeva challenges him to fight?
- Vali says, "You have elevated my status and honored me." What does this mean?

### Summary

In Eastern mythology, the Gods are capable of making mistakes. They are not all good and Ravana is not all evil. They fall in between on a spectrum. They transcend all duality.

- Do you agree with this point of view?
- Do you disagree?
- Why? Why not? Explain your answer.

## Homework

- Read chapter seven and define the vocabulary: expatiate, aridity, melancholy, eradicate.

Page 116, Rama explains that one should never surrender one's own judgment to another - especially out of love.

- In at least one page explain what this statement means.
- Then either agree or disagree with this statement. Try to imagine what life would be like if you never experienced any feelings of love and you were completely rational.

## UNIT 2, LESSON 8: Chapter 7

### Focus Question: How is Rama Psychologically Struggling Within Himself?

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define vocabulary that is crucial to the understanding of chapter seven.
- discuss and debate how and to what extent both passion and reason play a role in one's life.

### Springboard

▹ Use the preceding night's homework to discuss Rama's inner struggle. Have students read their homework responses aloud and then debate and discuss how and to what extent both passion and reason play in one's life. Then have students react to the following quotation by Dostoevsky:

"Reason is passion's slave"

### Procedure

Rama has indicated that women can lead to one's death because one surrenders one's judgment.

- Do you agree?
- Why might this occur?
- At the same time, how is Rama coping without Sita?
- What is the significance of the title of the chapter and the monsoons?
- What is Rama's sole mission on earth? Why then is Rama psychologically struggling within himself?

### Summary

Rama's human qualities are apparent. He realizes reason should take precedence over passion, yet he is passionately in love with Sita. His dharma is in conflict with his love for his wife.

- What other examples from mythology can you give of this situation?
- What examples from contemporary life can you find?

### Homework

▹ Read chapters 8 and 9 and define the following words: unobtrusive, cajoling, depredation, elude, ludicrous, prattling.

▹ Answer the following questions:

- How does Hanuman get to Lanka?
- What does he do to the city of Lanka?
- How do we know Sita has remained faithful to Rama?
- Why is Ravana responsible for his own demise?

## UNIT 2, LESSON 9: Chapter 8

**Focus Question: How do Events Foreshadow the Demise of Ravana and his Race?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define vocabulary that is crucial to the understanding of chapter eight.
- explain and discuss the pervasive use of oracles and foreboding in both Eastern and Western mythology.

### Teacher Background

*As in Western mythology, it is important to convey to students the importance of oracles and foreboding. Many times Ravana is warned, especially by his younger brother Vibishana (the wise sage), yet he ignores all warnings. The Gods always warn the wicked before they are killed.*

### Springboard

- Think about a time when someone gave you advice. Answer the following questions:
    - Who were they?
    - What was the advice?
    - Did you listen? Why or why not?

- Then have students discuss the following quotation:

> "A wise man learns from others' mistakes.
> A smart man learns from his own mistakes.
> A foolish man never learns."

- Do you agree or disagree with this? Explain your answer?

### Procedure

In previous chapters, we discussed how passion clouds one's vision.

- What other qualities might cloud one's vision?
- What qualities cloud Ravana's vision?
- What is the warning that Vibishana gives Ravana?
- Why is the sage the one who gives the warning?
- Why does the author go to great strides to reveal to us that Ram was warned?
- How many think Ram would forgive Ravana if he returned Sita after he was warned?
- Should Rama forgive Sita?

### Summary

The warnings reveal that the end is near for Ravana unless he heeds the prophet' s warning. He has the opportunity to change the course of his fate, but his tragic flaws cloud his vision and he is blinded by his myopia. He cannot see the truth.

- What other examples in mythology and literature can you give of people who have been warned but have not heeded the warning?

- Why do you think people do not pay attention to advice and warnings?
- How would you respond to a warning? Advice?

### Homework

▸ Read chapter 10, 11 and 12, and define the following words: brooding, asylum, emissary, piety, deployed, ominous, auspicious.

▸ Answer the following questions:

- How did Ravana try to stop Rama's army?
- Why doesn't Rama kill Ravana when he has the chance?
- What does this reveal about him?
- Why doesn't Ravana kill Sita?
- What analogy can be made in Western mythology to the battle between Ravana and Rama?
- What do you think each men symbolize?
- How does Rama defeat Ravana?

* * *

## UNIT 2, LESSON 10: Chapters 10, 11, 12

**Focus Question: Do You Think Rama is a Hero we Should Admire and Strive to Emulate?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**
- define vocabulary
- determine what qualities constitute a hero.
- review and explain the symbols that help us define a hero

### Teacher Background

*According to Joseph Campbell in* The Hero With a Thousand Faces," *the hero is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations. The hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man - perfected, unspecific, universal man - he has been reborn. His task and deed therefore is to return then to us transfigured and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed."*

### Springboard

- In your own words, what qualities come to your mind when you think of a hero?

▹ The teacher should write down responses on the board as the students brainstorm.

### Procedure

- Why do you think Rama was able to defeat Ravana when he emerged from his chamber with a heroic appearance?
- What did Rama possess that Ravana did not? How did he defeat Ravana?
- What was Ravana's vulnerable spot? Does this make sense?
- What might this suggest?

### Summary

Rama is a true hero because he is eternal man perfected. He has been sent to earth, transfigured, to teach a lesson that wisdom, justice and compassion are qualities one must emulate. Physical strength means nothing if the heart and soul are empty. A hero is not bound by worldly or human limitations, but soars beyond the realm of human thought. He or she transcends all that is physical. When Rama takes over his kingdom in Ayodha, he will have to teach such a lesson.

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Why not? Explain.

### Homework

▹ Read chapters 13 and 14.

- Should Rama have tested his wife with the funeral pyre or should he have simply welcomed her back into his arms unquestioningly?

## UNIT 2, LESSON 11: Chapters 13, 14 and the Epilogue

**Focus Question: How Does the Conclusion of The Ramayana Reflect Basic Eastern Philosophy and Hindu Values?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- define the ancient practice of *suttee*.
- debate whether or not the Eastern belief that the community is more important than the individual is better than the Western belief that the individual's needs are more important than the community.
- if possible compare the ending of *The Ramayana* to the ending of *The Odyssey*.

### Teacher Background

*At the end of the book, Sita must prove to Rama that she has remained faithful to him. In order for Rama to believe her, she must commit suttee, the ancient Indian practice in which the woman throws herself into her husband's funeral pyre to accompany him in his next life. In Sita's case, she must prove her chastity. At the end of the book, Sita is expelled from the fire, thus proving that she has remained faithful and Rama and she live happily ever after; however, Narayan chooses to leave out a very important scene at the end. In most versions, even after Sita commits the practice of suttee, Rama banishes Sita and his children to the forest and becomes king of Ayodha. He refuses to believe that she has remained chaste. As a result, Sita returns to mother earth despite Rama's pleadings that she does not. She cannot live with a man who does not implicitly and unconditionally trust her chastity. Ultimately, unlike Odysseus in* The Odyssey. *Rama chooses his kingdom over his wife.*

### Springboard

- Have students debate whether or not society is more important than the individual's needs or whether or not the individual is more important than society's needs. The teacher should provide some examples to make the debate less hypothetical.

### Procedure

Rama's actions are once again questioned at the end of the novel. First, he refuses to see Sita until she is dressed and decorated. Next, he tells Sita he was in Lanka not to save her but for the honor of his ancestors' codes and values. Lastly, he tells her he cannot take her back because she was with another man. Thus, he displays the limitations of his human frame.

- How does Sita respond to Rama's questioning?
- Did Ravana abduct her?
- Should Rama have stopped her? Why or why not?
- Why was Rama so quick to forgive Kaikeyi and not his own wife?
- What other options did Sita have?

*Ramayana* has had many different endings.

- How might this story end if it were in the Western mode?
- How might the story end if it were on TV?
- How would you like to end the story?

## Summary

Students should understand that one of the most distinct differences between Eastern philosophy and Western philosophy is that in Eastern philosophy the community is more important than the individual's needs. Rama must place the people of Ayodyha above his wife, whereas in Western philosophy, Odysseus places his family above the people of Ithaca. Odysseus is supported by the Gods as he kills the suitors. Rama can take no such actions. His prudence, wisdom and foresight must take precedence over love or passion.

In Western myths and Eastern myths, there are different points of emphasis.

▹ Working in small groups, list as many differences between western and eastern myths you can. Continue to add to the list as you check your responses with other groups.

▹ Students should write another persuasive essay illustrating the main difference between Eastern and Western philosophy. Students should then provide examples of why one philosophy is more efficacious than the other.

# Thematic Comparison/Contrast of the **Ramayana** to Homer's **Odyssey**

## UNIT 3

**Unit Focus Question: To What Extent are the Characteristics of a Hero Universal or Defined by the Culture?**

**Unit Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**
- examine the ideals of perfection as presented in the two epics, *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*.
- to discuss how some ideas/ideals are universal
- to utilize an epic text to explore Indian culture

**Note:** *These lessons may be tailored to any level student. With exceptional students, all six themes could be used; with average students, perhaps only four; with lower ability students, two or three of the themes.*

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## UNIT 3, LESSON 1

**Focus Question: What is a Hero?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:**
- create a definition for the word "hero" that can be used to describe the character in both the *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*.
- analyze the characteristics of the hero
- determine the extent to which we can define a hero.

### Teacher Background

*The concept of the hero can be somewhat culturally bound as it can also be defined in terms of a specific historical time period. However, heroes usually embody several or all of the following qualities: respect for a supreme being or the gods; a lack of a fear of death; willingness to fight for honor, glory and fame; a rigid code of honor; a conflict which can be either internal or exterior or both; has an enemy to overcome.*

### Procedures

✎ Teacher will ask students to silently brainstorm in a notebook or their journals:

- What are the qualities of a hero?

▸ Using blank transparencies and an overhead projector, students will share their brainstorming, making a composite picture of a hero. Teacher may use a semantic web, a cartoon figure, an outline chart or any other devise that will elicit the student's responses and enthusiasm. Students will respond to questions:

- We have worked together to define what we mean by a hero, how does the class response differ from your initial response?

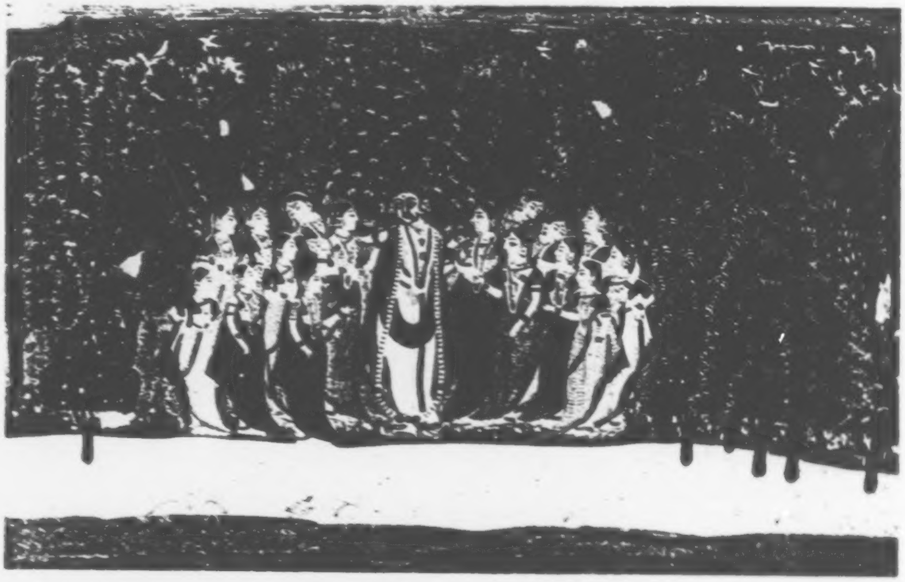
- How can we best define the hero incorporating many of the qualities you have stated?

We are going to be studying two different works of literature. One is the product of Western culture. The other is an equally old and important epic which is important for the culture of South Asia. In one, *The Odyssey*, the hero is Ulysses. In the second, *Ramayana*, the hero is Rama. During the next few weeks, we are going to try to determine if the qualities of the hero are the same in both these books which represent two totally different cultures.

Teacher will keep the transparency reflecting the student's responses. It will be used periodically to remind the students of what they have said and to allow them to make any adjustments.

**Summary/Application**
Heros are all around us in dramas on TV, cartoons, comic books, movies and even our daily lives.

Select a "hero" and determine if he/she has the qualities defined in class today. ✎ Write a short paragraph explaining your choice and the qualifications of a hero.



## UNIT 3, LESSON 2, Teaching The Odyssey (suggested time frame: two weeks)

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- establish a framework for understanding an epic, especially preparing students to compare and contrast two literary works.
- name the major characters in *The Odyssey* as well as determine their special characteristics and qualities
- explore the major themes developed to understand *The Odyssey*
- define the Greek ideal of the hero.

### Materials

The *Odyssey, (possible source: Adventures in Reading, Heritage Edition Revised, Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1985.)*

### Teacher Background

***The Odyssey*** *is a sequel to Homer's first work,* ***The Iliad****. In that part, Odysseus had set sail for Troy to help Menelaus win Helen, his wife, back from Paris. Agamemnon, the king of the Acheans, and the older brother of Menelaus, led them in a ten-year war against the Trojans. Finally, using Odysseus' idea of a hollow horse statue as a peace offering to the Trojan gods, the Acheans win the war and sail for home.*

***The Odyssey*** *picks up ten years after the fateful battle. Odysseus is still not home, although all the other surviving chieftains have returned to their lands. Since he has been absent for twenty years, the nobles of Ithaca have taken up residence in Odysseus's palace, hoping to marry Penelope, Odysseus' faithful wife. She will not marry until she knows for sure that Odysseus is dead, and so the suitors stay on, trying to change her mind while, at the same time, wasting the resources of Odysseus' household. Telemachus, Odysseus' son, goes to visit the other chieftains to see what he can find out about his father.*

*Odysseus, meanwhile, has been wandering the world as a result of a curse from Poseidon. His telling of his adventures and mishaps is the section of* ***The Odyssey*** *with which most people are familiar. Of all of those who left Troy with him, only he survives. With the aid of the king of Phaeacia, he returns once more to Ithaca.*

*He reveals himself to his son, Telemachus, and together, with help from Athena and two other trusty servants, Odysseus punishes the suitors, takes back his kingdom, and reclaims his wife. A potential civil war in Ithaca is averted through the intercession of the gods and this deus ex machina ends the epic.*

### Procedures

In teaching *The Odyssey*, there are several themes that are important for the discussions. Rather than develop specific lessons, it is suggested that the text be explored through the multiple themes with reference made to people and episodes which exemplify the theme. The framework that is developed for teaching one epic will be used to also teach the second epic. This will allow the students many opportunities to compare and contrast strategies to understand the multiple levels of each work.

(**Worksheet 1** can be given to students to use as a glossary of the characters in the **Odyssey.**)

| THEME | PEOPLE/EPISODE |
|---|---|
| Woman as the ideal wife | Penelope against the suitors<br>Penelope against the returned Odysseus |
| Woman as Temptress | Circle; Sirens; Calypso |
| Hubris | Odysseus with Polyphemus (the Cyclops)<br>Odysseus and the Cattle of the Sun God |
| Greek Ideal of Hospitality | Odysseus in the hall of the Phaecians<br>Odysseus and the Cyclops<br>Odysseus as the beggar in his hall on Ithaca |
| Role of the Gods in Everyday Life | Polyphemus' curse (via Poseidon)<br>Helio's curse<br>Athena's intervention against the suitors |
| Symbols of The Odyssey as a Journey Through Life | The Circones (conquering hero)<br>The Lotus-Eaters (escapism)<br>The Cyclops (too much pride)<br>The Sirens (temptation)<br>Scylla and Charibdis (hard choices)<br>Penelope (ideal wife)<br>Telemachus (ideal son)<br>Odysseus (ideal warrior)<br>Eumaeus & Eurycleia (ideal servants) |

## To What Extent are the Characteristics of a Hero Universal or Defined by the Culture?

### Worksheet 1: People and Places in the Odyssey

*(**Adventures in Reading**, Heritage Edition Revised. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1985, pp549-50.)*

Achaena: Greeks, especially the people of Achaea in northern Greece

Aeaea: island home of Circe, the enchantress

Agamemnon: commander of the Greeks during the Trojan War.

Alcinous: King of Phaeacia

Antinous: an Ithacan noble, most arrogant of all the suitors

Apollo: in Greek mythology, god of poetry, music and prophesy.

Argo: the ship manned by Jason and his crew of Greek heroes on their quest for the Golden Fleece.

Athena: Greek goddess of wisdom, crafts and war.

Calypso: beautiful sea nymph, who kept Odysseus on her island for seven years.

Charybdis: a whirlpool in the Straits of Messina, personified as a female monster.

Circones: People of the southwestern coast of Thrace, who were attacked by Odysseus' men into beasts.

Circe: beautiful witch-goddess who transformed Odysseus' men into beasts.

Cronus: in Greek mythology, a Titan and ruler of the universe until Zeus, his son, overthrew him.

Cyclops: member of a race of one-eyed giants. Cyclopes lived as shepherds on the island of Sicily.

Eumaeus: a swineherd, an old and loyal servant of Odysseus.

Eurycleia: Penelope's servant and Odyssus' old nurse.

Eurylochus: one of Odysseus' crew.

Eurymachus: one of Penelope's suitors, an Ithacan noble.

Helios: in early Greek mythology, the sun god.

Ithaca: Odysseus' home, an island off the western coast of Greece.

Laertes: Odysseus' father.

Laestrygonians: race of man-eating giants.

Odysseus: king of Ithaca and hero of the Odyssey.

Penelope: Odysseus' wife.

Phaeacia: an island kingdom, inhabited by seafarers and traders.

Polyphemus: a Cyclops, son of Poseidon.

Poseidon: Greek god of the sea, identified with the Roman god Neptune.

Scylla: a rock in the straits of Messina, personified a 6-headed female monster who devoured passing sailors.

Sirens: sea nymphs who lured sailors to destruction with their songs.

Telemachus: son of Odysseus and Penelope.

Zeus: ruler of the gods and goddess on Mount Olympus.

## UNIT 3, LESSON 3, Teaching the Ramayana (suggested time frame: two weeks)

### Materials

R. K. Narayan, **Ramayana**. NY, NY: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1972.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- establish a framework for understanding an epic, especially preparing students to compare and contrast two literary works.
- name the major characters in **Ramayana** as well as determine their special characteristics and qualities
- explore the major themes developed to understand **Ramayana**

### Procedures

The chart below is a replica of the one which is used for teaching *The Odyssey* but, in this case, the people and events of the *Ramayana* are used instead. However, the themes remain constant so that the teacher can return to them to tie the two epics together.

| Theme | People/Episode |
|---|---|
| Woman as the Ideal wife | Sita - always |
| Woman as Temptress | Shurpanaka; Kaikeyi and Dasharatha; Ahalya; Ravana and Sita |
| Hubris | Ravana vs. the gods; Ravana and Sita |
| Indian Ideal of Hospitality | Sita and sadhu (Ravana); Rama and Shabari; Wedding (court of Janaka); Bathing of the feet |
| Role of the Gods in Everyday Life | Vishnu as Rama; Sita's prayer to all gods; Sadhu (representative of god on earth); Sita worships Rama |
| Symbols in Ramayana as a Journey through Life | Ram and Ravana (conquering hero); The Forest (escapism); Ravana (too much pride); Shurpanaka (temptation); Laksman & Sita (hard choices); Rama (ideal man); Sita (ideal wife); Laksman (ideal brother); Hanuman (ideal servant) |

## UNIT 3, LESSON 4

## Putting it Together: A Thematic Comparison/Contrast of the Ramayana to Homer's Odyssey

(suggested time: one week)

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- compare and contrast the *Ramayana* of South Asia and *The Odyssey* of Homer.
- analyze the two works of literature, through discussion and writing.
- evaluate the importance and impact of each epic in the culture of the region.

### Procedures

▹ Teacher will distribute: **Worksheet 1: A Thematic Comparison/Contrast of Ramayana to The Odyssey.** Teacher will discuss how we have talked about each of these themes when we have looked at the specific work of literature, we are now interested in seeing how each theme applied to both works. [Samples discussion questions follow each theme.]

**I. Woman as Ideal wife**

▹ Develop two semantic webs - one for Penelope, one for Sita. Allow students time to work quietly and as a large group.

- What characteristics do they share?
- Which characteristics are different?
- These two women are the role models for their societies. What conclusions can you draw about these societies based on these two women?
- In Western culture, Homer's story has become just that, a story. the **Ramayana**, however, is still told as a religious story in many parts of the world. What reflection does this show on both Western culture and modern Indian culture?

[These questions should be developed working with the social studies teacher.]

- How does each epic reflect its society?
- How does each epic determine the role of women when it was written and today?
- To what extent has the concept of the ideal wife helped or hindered each society?

**II. Woman as Temptress**

- Women have been seen in this light even in the Judeo-Christian tradition of Adam and Eve. How did Ram and Odysseus differ when sexual temptation was given?
- Can Odysseus refuse the temptation of glory given him by the Sirens?
- If Ram past the Sirens' island, what would have been the temptations? Could he have refused?
- The "double standard" concerning marital fidelity that exists for Odysseus does not exist for Ram. What conclusions can we draw from this?
- Are there any temptresses in modern society? What are the temptations? Are they resistible?
- Why are women always cast in the role of temptress? What does this say about male dominance in both cultures?

**III. Hubris**

- In **The Odyssey**, the protagonist has the problem of pride; in the **Ramayana**, it's the antagonist. What statement does this make concerning heroes in the two countries?

**IV. Hospitality** [Note: You can tell a good deal about a culture from the way it treats its guests.]

- How are guests treated in the **Ramayana**? What does this tell us about the culture?

- How are guests treated in **The Odyssey**? What does this tell us about the culture?
- There are obvious similarities between them. What is hospitality like in 20th century America? What does this tell us about our culture?

### V. Role of the Gods

[Note: Be sure to point out a fundamental difference: The Greek's belief in polytheism had died out, the Hindu belief in multiple gods is alive and flourishing. However, although the Hindus believe in many gods, are they really all incarnations of a single god?]

- The gods in both these stories take a very active role in the lives of humans. How does this affect the character's actions?

### VI. Symbols of Life's journey

- What are some of the "stops" on life's journey in your lives?
- Are any of these "stops" in **The Odyssey** or **Ramayana**? [Note: Teacher might look at **Ramayana** lessons related to the passages in a life.]
- Ram and Odysseus symbolize the ideal in their societies. Both are called heroes but are very different men. How can two different such approaches both fit the definition of a hero?
- Aside from entertainment, what lessons can be learned from **The Odyssey**? From **Ramayana**?
- *North Americans* are descendants of the Acheans. How has the ideal of **The Odyssey** affected us?
- How may we have been different if Ram had been our ideal instead of Odysseus?

## Writing Assignment/Evaluation

▸ Students will choose one of the following topics and write an essay. Be sure to include examples from the two epics to answer the question.

A. Compare and contrast the roles of women in the *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*.
- What do the characters of Sita and Penelope show us about the roles of women in these two societies? [Compare them to Eleanor Roosevelt of Hillary Clinton.]

B. What is a hero?
- Do both Ram and Odysseus embody the qualities of a hero?
- What is the difference in their approaches?

C. Both the *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey* show man's journey through life. Choose one episode from each epic and show how this journey is symbolic.
- What is the reader to learn from this part of the journey?

D. Sociable behavior is defined by society.
- What are the Greek and Indian views of hospitality?
- What can we learn about a people from studying their etiquette?

E. Epics often play an important role in society.
- What role do these two epics, *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*, play in ancient Indian and ancient Greek societies?
- What role do these two epics, *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*, play in modern Indian and modern Greek or Western societies?

## To What Extent are the Characteristics of a Hero Universal or Defined by the Culture?

### Worksheet 1: A Thematic Comparison/Contrast of the Ramayana to Homer's Odyssey

Directions: Listed below are the major themes of the *Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*. In the appropriate columns, list the people and/or episodes from each epic that illustrates the theme.

| Theme | People/Episode |
|---|---|
| Woman as the Ideal Wife | |
| Woman as Temptress | |
| Hubris | |
| Ideal of Hospitality | |
| Role of the Gods in Everyday Life | |
| Symbols used to show Man's Journey Through life | |

## UNIT 4, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: Are Songs Important In Relaying Information About the Role of the Ramayana in People's Lives?

### Main Idea

- Societies have many less formal institutions which help us understand the importance of epics in their lives. In South Asia, songs give us great insights into the everyday significance of the *Ramayana*.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- show how men's and women's songs are used in a folklore tradition within the framework of the epic, the *Ramayana*.
- compare and contrast the songs of men and women in terms of their insights into their lives.
- evaluate the degree to which songs give us information about a society,

### Teacher Background

*The* ***Ramayana*** *is an oral tradition and has many "tellings." In addition to the standard telling of the story, there are other ways the Ramayana has influenced the lives of the people on a daily basis. One way is in the singing of songs. Many of these songs directly refer to segments of the epic; other songs are derivative and allude to some episode in the text or expand upon some of the ideas in the text. Often these ideas are related to the lives of the people. In India, these songs are gender-based and men and women sing different songs at different times in different places. For men, the singing of songs brings them honor; for women the singing of songs helps to forge community. In both cases, they are "living traditions" and another variation in the performance of the epic, the Ramayana.*

### Springboard

Show the video segment of men and women singing.

- What differences do you see?
- What differences do you hear?

### Procedure

- Divide class into cooperative learning groups of four each.

- Distribute **Worksheet 1: Songs Women Sing** to one half the groups.
- Distribute **Worksheet 2: Songs Men Sing** to one half the groups.

Allow students time to read songs and complete exercise. Teacher will place the organizer on the chalkboard.

| MEN'S SONGS | WOMEN'S SONGS |
|---|---|
| Importance of Rama | |
| Importance of Sita | |
| Importance of Sons | |
| Importance of Daughters | |

Each group will contribute to the discussion of the material. Teacher will record responses.

One student will be selected to read a woman's song. Student will decide if information has been omitted and add additional categories to the chart. This procedure will continue for the remaining four songs so that all the students will have an opportunity to hear and discuss each song.

- What additional categories were we able to add when we heard all the songs?
- Why do you think these subjects are in the songs? What does that tell us about life in rural India?

How would you compare the women's songs to the men's songs?

- Where are they the same?
- Where are they different?
- Which songs do you think reveal more about the lives of the people in the culture?

**Summary/Application**
Songs are an outlet in every society and can serve secular, religious, and symbolic purposes.

- How do these songs serve secular purposes?
- How do these songs serve religious purposes?
- How do these songs serve symbolic purposes?
- What other purposes do they serve?

✎ Students will return to cooperative learning groups. Based upon today's lesson, they will write a song which can serve any of the purposes previously discussed. Each group will either sing, chant or recite their song. The class will then discuss how that song reveals something about the society.

## Are Songs Important In Relaying Information About the Role of the Ramayana in People's Lives?

### Worksheet 1: Women and Their Songs in South Asia

*(These songs were collected in the village of Karimpur and translated by Susan S. Wadley. Printed by permission.)*

*In villages in the north of India, women will meet and perform songs. These performances are held for special occasions such as the birth of a child, weddings, the visit home by a married daughter or as a special favor for a honored guest. Women's lives are very busy but they find time to meet mid-day in the inner courtyard of their home. The married women tend to sit together to gossip, as they seldom have opportunities to meet; the unmarried girls form another cluster and are the main singers. They are "shown" so the other villagers know they are available for marriage. The performance is hosted by a senior woman and her daughters and daughters-in-law attend with her. Let's take look at some of these songs.*

I. Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
May he grow up to be wise,
And give pleasure to everyone.

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
May he benefit others,
And care little for himself.

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
May be he a good judge,
And bring righteousness to the earth.

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
Baldeo says, "He is true who signs God's praises."
Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.

II. This wonderful temple is built for your worship, oh god.
One friend is walking ahead and the other behind,
And Sita is walking between them.

This wonderful temple is built for your worship, oh god.
One friend is walking with a plate in her hand, and the other with a pitcher,
And Sita is walking with a garland in her hand.

This wonderful temple is built for your worship, oh god.
One friend had folded hand, the other is bowing.
and Sita is standing and seeking your blessings.
This wonderful temple is built for your worship, oh god.

## III. Women's Wedding Song

Ram has come into my orchard,
With how many thousands of elephants and horse?
And how many thousands of kinsmen?

Ram has come into my orchard,
Oh, King Dasharatha, how many thousands of kings have come?
And how many thousands of people?

Ram has come into my orchard,
Ten thousand elephants and horses have come,
And twenty thousand relatives.

Ram has come into my orchard,
What should I offer for the elephants and the horses?
And what for the kinsmen?

Ram has come into my orchard,
What can I give to please King Dasharatha,
And what to my son-in-law?

Ram has come into my orchard,
I'll give green grass to the elephants and horses,
And a feast for the kinsmen.

Ram has come into my orchard,
I should give much wealth to please King Darsharath.
And I'll give my darling daughter to my son-in-law.
Ram has come into my orchard,

**Exercise:** In your group, complete the chart below based on the songs:

| | |
|---|---|
| Importance of Sita | |
| Importance of Ram | |
| Role of sons | |
| Role of daughters | |
| Other important kin | |

- How do these songs help us understand the importance of the *Ramayana* in the daily lives of the people?

## Are Songs Important In Relaying Information About the Role of the Ramayana in People's Lives?

### Worksheet 2: Men and Their Songs in South Asia

*In villages in North India, men meet to perform songs. When men meet, it is in the evening. Instead of meeting in the courtyard of the house, they will gather in the front of the house. They often have elaborate instruments with a range of sounds. This differs from women who may have only a single drum. Men also tend to focus on one singer, where women's performances will be more communal. For men, these performances are a vehicle to create honor for themselves.*

I. In this lifetime, you will never be spared work:
But put aside some time to recall the love of Ram.
Even now this happens, but think, brother,
this system of dowry, it is ruining our country.
It's everywhere in India, our eyes are blind to it.
Surely we must throw light on this cause of poverty.
It's because of money: it quickly causes death.
It quickly causes death.
A young girl sits in the house;
day and night the worry never ceases.
Mother and father are distressed;
mother and father are distressed.
"How can we get her married?
How can we get her married?
Which way?
We don't have enough money, crying we shall die.
Somehow we must find a horse and a groom."
The boy's father says this, the boy's father say's this:
"I am demanding ten thousand rupees from you in the marriage."
This is happening in India;
No one pays it any heed.
At the boy's place, they treat you as they like.
Weddings are like cattle markets.
"We will take five thousand in lagun,"
then they do the engagement. The girl's people are helpless.
The girl's people are helpless.
How can they have courage?
A grownup daughter is waiting,
"How can we get her married?
This is the problem with daughters;
This sin (having dowries) is very great.
This sin is very great.
Where can I find this much money?
Thousands are needed."
Destroy this giving and taking;
we must improve conditions in India.
Now with folded hands, Raghuvir speaks.
Sri Ram is our solace.

**II.** Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.
Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.
Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.
Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.

Guard Sita, She is alone.
And Ram went to fetch water,
Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.

Lakshman will be in the lap of Sita.
So Ram thought, walking in the woods,
And sitting on a branch. He spoke with pleasing words.

Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.
Guard Sita, she is alone.
And Ram went to fetch water, He went to get water.

How beautiful is that woman,
Are you a fool that you don't love her?
Even the birds are better than you.

Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.
Guard Sita, she is alone.
And Ram went to fetch water,
Hearing this, Lakshman was silent.
Then spoke in anger, "Go to hell.
You are shameless; your neck should break."
Saying this, he released his pain.

Ram thought to test Lakshman, to test his brother's heart.
His heart was clean, but the curse -
A parrot fell to the ground.
Oh Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram.
Saying this, he released his pain.
Ram though to test Lakshman.

**Exercise:** In your group, complete the chart below based on the songs

| | |
|---|---|
| Importance of Sita | |
| Importance of Rama | |
| Role of Sons | |
| Role of Daughters | |
| Other important kin | |

- How do these songs help us understand the importance of the *Ramayana* in people's lives?

# Chapter II

## To What Extent Does Ramayana Introduce India and its Culture?

## UNIT 5, LESSON 1

*These lessons are designed to help students "decode" reading which may be unfamiliar and, therefore, strange and difficult. The two lessons allow students to begin to feel more comfortable with material as they learn about the characters and the plot. This type of strategy is particularly helpful for students regardless of their ability level.*

### Focus Question: What Characteristics Do We Look at in Describing/Defining Someone From Another Culture?

### Major Ideas:

- In looking at people from other cultures, we describe them physically, mentally/emotionally, socially/culturally, and we examine the internal and external conflicts in their lives.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- identify different descriptors people use in describing someone else.
- categorize those descriptors within a webbing format.
- develop a semantic mapping, enabling them to gather and categorize information, make comparisons and draw conclusions about patterns and values.

### Teacher Background

*Webbing (semantic mapping)(mapping) is a graphic aid that allows the student to gather information from the reading/listening/viewing and categorize it under predetermined headings. The information entered within the categories can then be evaluated and conclusions dawn to address a variety of inquiries. Depending on the level of the student, the teacher may either prescribe the categories or elicit student input to create the headings.*

*For this lesson, the headings have been prescribed in order to guide the discussion.*

### Springboard

When we meet someone new and begin to get to know them we look at a variety of information that tells us about them.

- If you were to tell an "old friend" about a "new friend", how would you describe your new friend?
- What kinds of words and phrases do we use?

### Procedure

▹ Divide students into groups of 4 for "Round Robin" cooperative activity.

▹ Distribute 1 blank sheet of paper and allow only 1 pen/pencil per group. As materials are passed from person to person, each student records a word or phrase that could describe someone. Allow 5 minutes for students to brainstorm through this activity, then recall them to a whole group focus.

▹ Distribute **Worksheet 1: Who Am I?** Discuss the format of webbing with students:

*Central oval is for a theme or focus label*
*Smaller ovals are for subheadings or categories.*
*The location of the ovals on the page allows room for recording of information details.*
*Explain the meaning of each category.*

▹ Using the "Round Robin" cooperative format again:

- groups categorize the brainstormed list of descriptors;
- each student recording a descriptor under a subheading before passing materials to the next student.
- Repeat until all descriptors have been categorized.
- All members of a group should agree on the placement of a descriptor within one or more categories before it is recorded.
- Recall the groups to a whole group focus at the end of an appropriate time interval.

**Summary/Application**

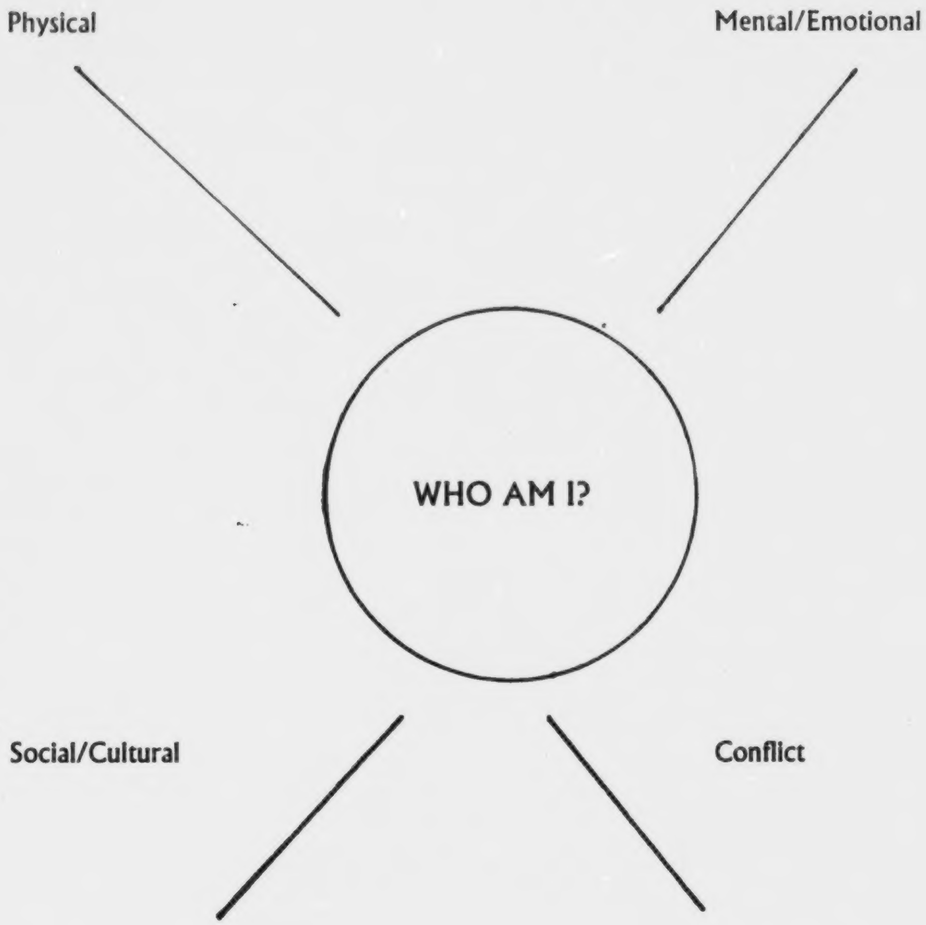
*(Teacher's Note: It is useful to have an overhead transparency of the Worksheet. The teacher records the information, guides the discussion, and adjusts the categorization through the use of the transparency.)*

▹ A representative from each group shares the categorized descriptor with the whole class while the teacher records the descriptors on an overhead transparency of Worksheet 1. As each group reports, have them add only descriptors not already reported and recorded.

▹ Discuss why some descriptors may be used in more than one category. Keep the transparency available to refer to when necessary to review the categories and the process of webbing.

## What Characteristics Do We Look at in Describing/Defining Someone From Another Culture?

### Worksheet 1: Who Am I?


Physical
Mental/Emotional
WHO AM I?
Social/Cultural
Conflict

## UNIT 5, LESSON 2

### Focus Question: How Does The Ramayana Help us Define the Indian People?

### Major Ideas:

- A people's literature can help us define the people in many ways. Understanding the literature of a people provides insight to understanding the culture of the people. Understanding the literature of a culture allows us to compare and contrast the values of that culture with our own.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- identify and categorize information describing the people of India using a webbing strategy.
- analyze the information to create a description of the Indian people re: physical, mental/emotional, social/cultural and conflict aspects derived from the reading.
- compare the description of the Indian people to themselves.

### Teacher Background

*Whether oral, written or performed, a culture's literature is full of information about what is important to that culture. How people describe themselves physically and emotionally allows us to understand the self-view people within the culture have. Perceiving social and cultural patterns shows us what a culture feels is important in interpersonal relationships. Identifying the conflicts in the lives of people when a culture helps us to understand the values of that culture. Interweaving the information and patterns discovered within the literature help us define a people. It also allows us to view ourselves using the same criteria and leads to a comparison between the culture of the reader and the culture of the creators.*

*For this lesson, the headings in the webbing have been prescribed with the idea of creating a definition of the Indian people that could, itself, be used as a springboard for more in-depth study of the Indian culture to confirm or alter that definition.*

### Procedures

*(Teacher's Note: It is useful to have an overhead transparency of Worksheet 2. The teacher guides discussion, records information and adjusts the categorization through the transparency. It becomes a resource tool.)*

- Distribute a copy of **Worksheet 2: Indian People** to each student or have students copy the webbing format onto a clean page in their notebooks. (Advise students to be careful of placements of ovals on the page to allow room for recording.) Label the central oval with the Focus Question. Label smaller ovals with the same subheadings from **Worksheet 1**.

- Distribute **Reading 1** to each group. Groups read the section, then discuss and decide what descriptor information can be gleaned from the reading and in what category (-ies) is should be recorded. Each student should record it in his/her notebook. After an appropriate time interval, recall students to a group focus.

- Each group shares their categorization of information as in Day 1's Summary/Application section.

### Summary/Application

When the reading and recording is completed, the teacher can help students to summarize the information and identify patterns through questions. The overhead transparency is used as a resource. Notes on patterns, etc. can be recorded on it, also.

- What information did we find today? OR - What new information did we find today?
- How does the new information confirm our ideas or alter our definition?
- What patterns do we see emerging?
- What values and beliefs do we find are important to the Indian people?

✎ Journal Reflection in notebook: (Teacher will list questions on the board.)

- What did I learn today that I didn't know before?
- How do my feelings and ideas compare to the ideas found in the *Ramayana*?
- How are my ideas the same as those I found in the story? How are they different?
- What values and beliefs do I share with the Indian people?
- What did I find in today's reading that I'd like to investigate further?

### Expanding the Activities

Subsequent reading of sections of the *Ramayana* can be handled in the same manner. Information should be added to the same webbing, with the teacher recording the information on the overhead transparency while students record it in the webbing in their notebooks.

Reading sections of the *Ramayana* can be handled in a variety of ways. Suggestions follow:

- Either within groups, or whole class style, students choose a character and read the comic aloud as if it was a play script. Categorization and recording is done afterwards.
- Each students reads silently and records information in his/her notebook. Teacher-led discussion and student sharing of information follows with the teacher recording information on the transparency while students adjust recording in their notebooks.
- Divide class into four groups. Each group focuses on one category in the webbing. Students read the section, discuss descriptor information and record. Each group shares information with the rest of the class. The information is recorded in their notebooks as it is shared. The teacher records new information on the transparency.

### Summarizing

- **Author's purpose** - What is the message or lesson?
- **Compare/Contrast** - How are they like me? - How are they different from me?

New webbings with other headings can reorganize and refocus information to new purposes:

- **Story Elements** - *Central Oval* = Ramayana ; *Subheadings* = Characters (describe each) Theme/Author's Purpose, Setting(s), Plot (action)
- **Characterization** - *Central Oval* = Rama; *Subheadings* = Physical/Mental/Emotional Conflicts (Internal/External)

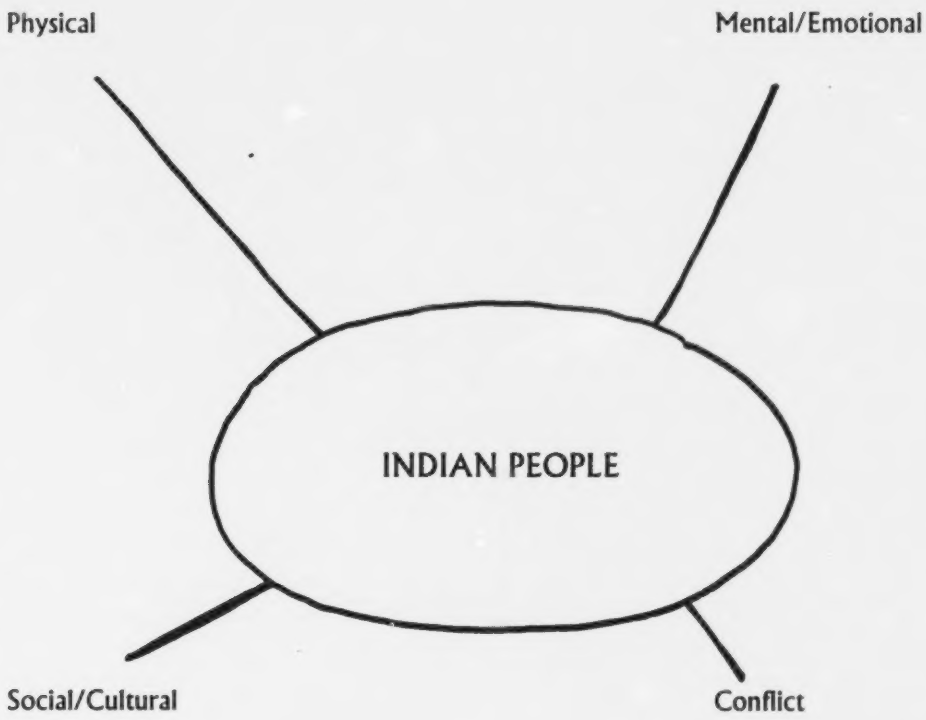
## Addendum

The information in this webbing can also be used to address other reading and literature comprehension skills that support reading in the content area. These skills can be addressed as the *Ramayana* is read section-by-section. In using the webbing to review information about the story to identify cultural elements, skills addressed include:

- **Story Elements** - Character, plot, setting, theme
- **Literary Elements** - Conflicts - Internal/External
- **Sequence** - Reviewing the action of the story
- **Draw Conclusions** - Identifying patterns and issues

## How Does The Ramayana Help us Define the Indian People?

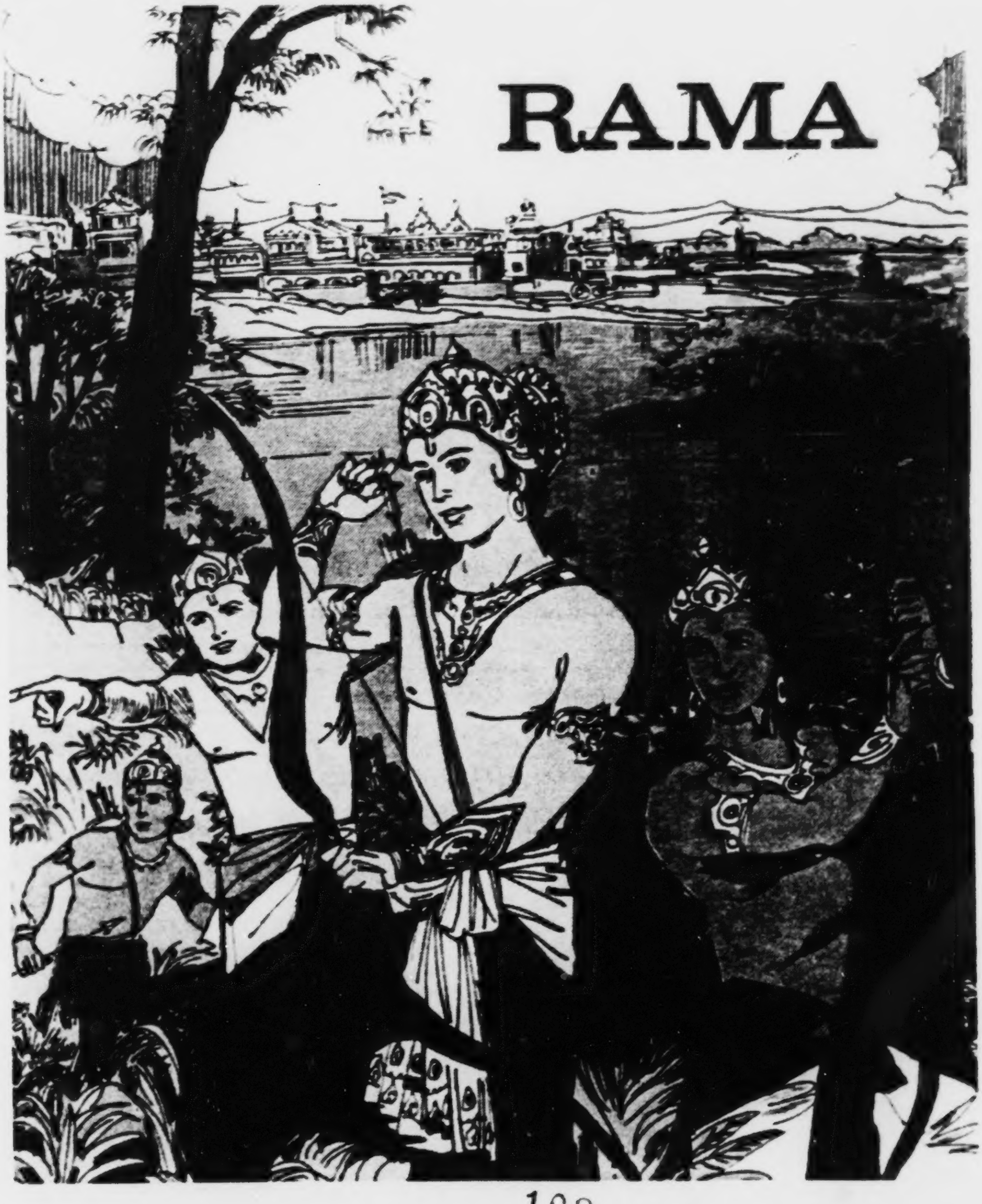
### Worksheet 2: Indian People

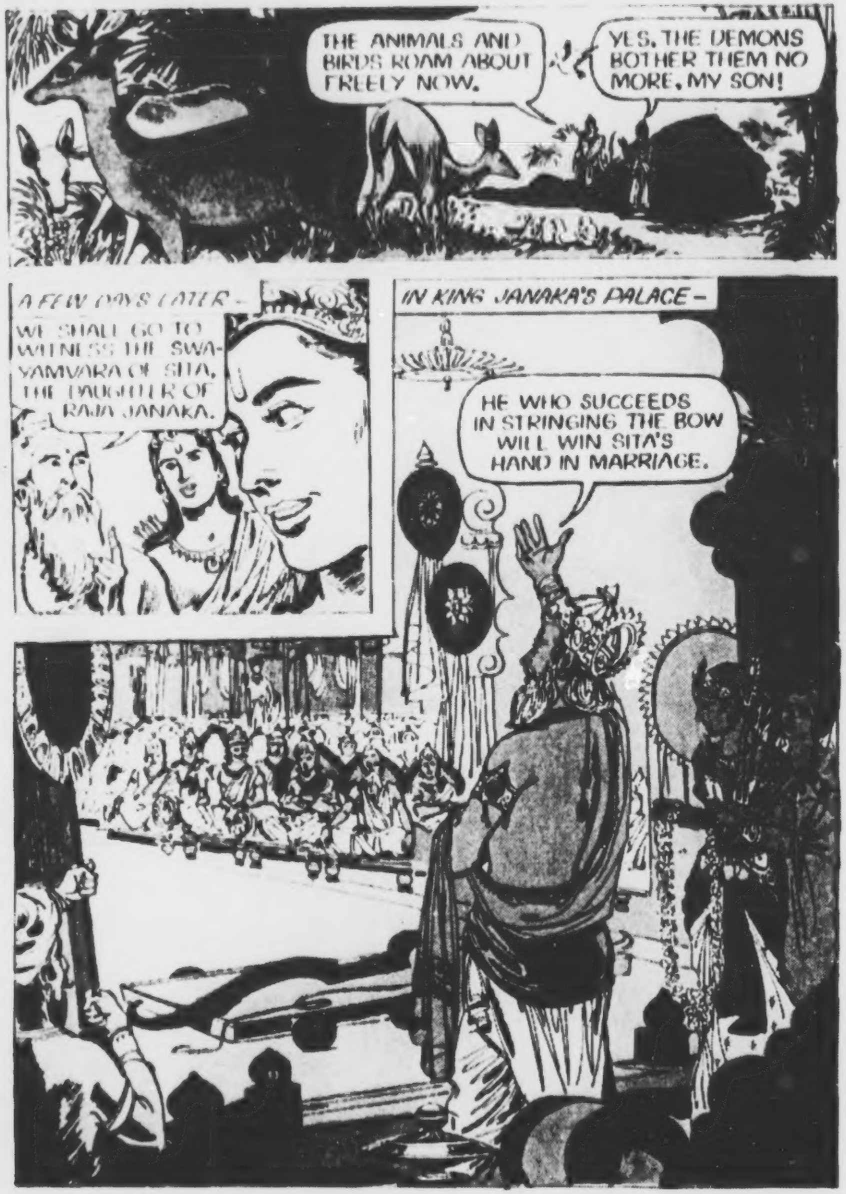

Physical
Mental/Emotional
INDIAN PEOPLE
Social/Cultural
Conflict

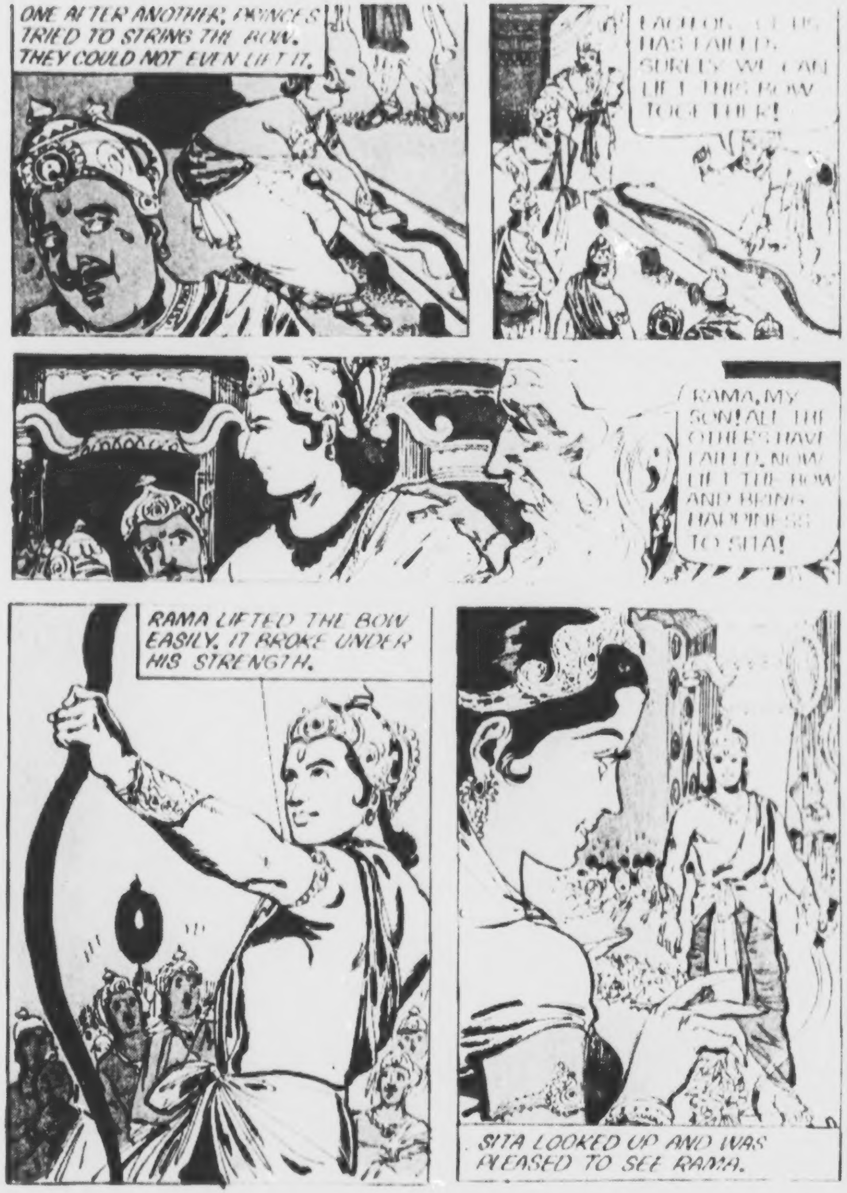
## Reading 1: Comic Strip Ramayana

*(Pictures reprinted from the* ***Comic Book Rama****, Amar Chitra Kartha: The Glorious Heritage of India, India Book House Pvt. Ltd, 1992, pp1-6)*

Other selections can be used from the **Comic Book Rama** including: pp. 7-12 up through Bharata's agreement to let the sandals represent Rama; pp. 12-18(top) - the abduction of Sita and death of Jatayu; pp. 18(bottom)-12 - Hanuman's story; pp. 22-end - trip to Lanka, battle and victory, crowning of King Rama.




THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS ROAM ABOUT FREELY NOW.
YES, THE DEMONS BOTHER THEM NO MORE, MY SON!
A FEW DAYS LATER –
WE SHALL GO TO WITNESS THE SWAYAMVARA OF SITA, THE DAUGHTER OF RAJA JANAKA.
IN KING JANAKA'S PALACE –
HE WHO SUCCEEDS IN STRINGING THE BOW WILL WIN SITA'S HAND IN MARRIAGE.


ONE AFTER ANOTHER, PRINCES TRIED TO STRING THE BOW. THEY COULD NOT EVEN LIFT IT.
EACH ONE OF US HAS FAILED. SURELY WE CAN LIFT THIS BOW TOGETHER!
RAMA, MY SON! ALL THE OTHERS HAVE FAILED. NOW LIFT THE BOW AND BRING HAPPINESS TO SITA!
RAMA LIFTED THE BOW EASILY. IT BROKE UNDER HIS STRENGTH.
SITA LOOKED UP AND WAS PLEASED TO SEE RAMA.

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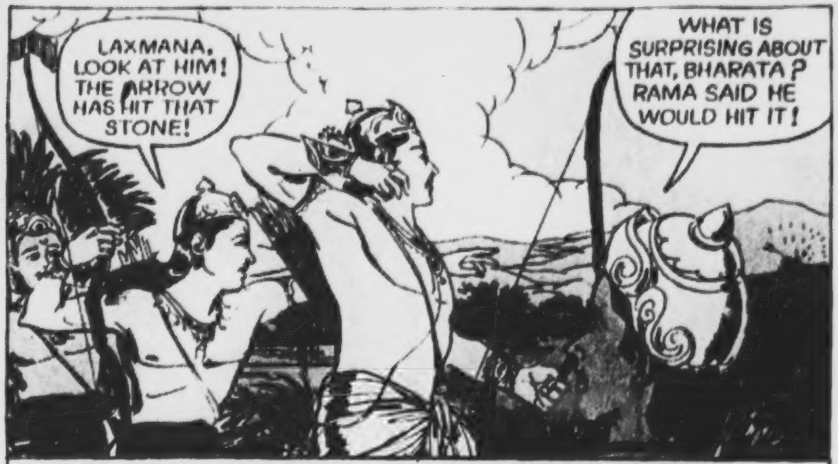
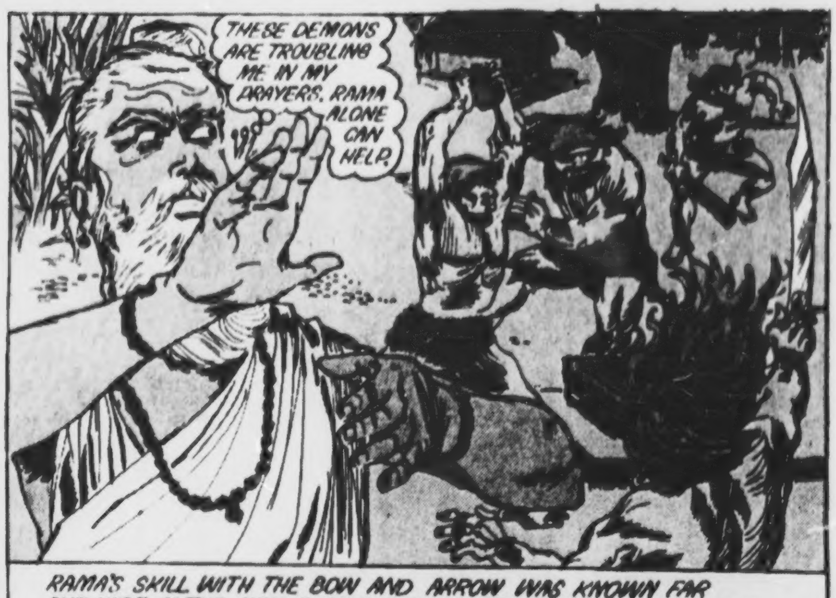
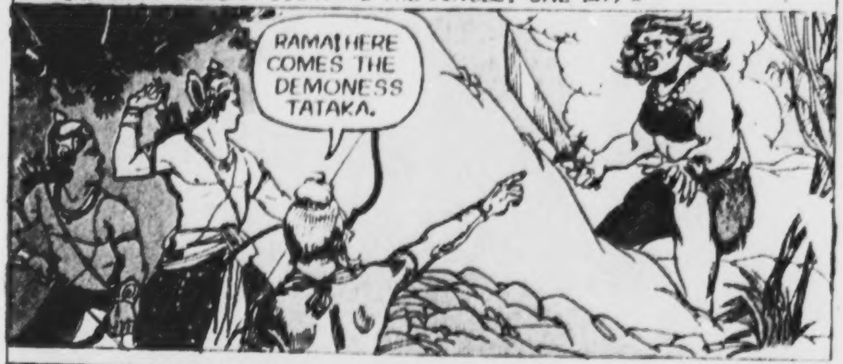

LAXMANA, LOOK AT HIM! THE ARROW HAS HIT THAT STONE!
WHAT IS SURPRISING ABOUT THAT, BHARATA? RAMA SAID HE WOULD HIT IT!

RAMA WAS BORN OF QUEEN KAUSHALYA, BHARATA OF QUEEN KAIKEYI AND LAXMANA AND SHATRUGHNA OF QUEEN SUMITRA. BUT THEY WERE ALL DEEPLY ATTACHED TO ONE ANOTHER.

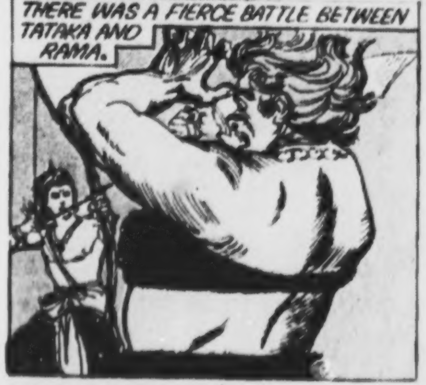

THESE DEMONS ARE TROUBLING ME IN MY PRAYERS. RAMA ALONE CAN HELP.

RAMA'S SKILL WITH THE BOW AND ARROW WAS KNOWN FAR AND WIDE. IN THE JUNGLE, SAGE VISHWAMITRA ALSO REMEMBERED IT.

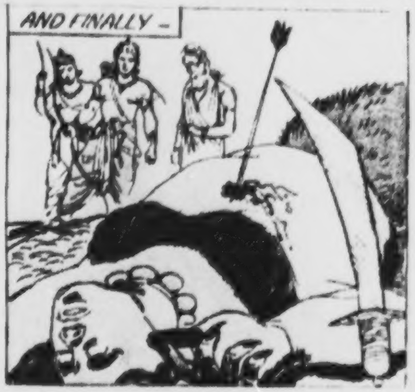
SO, WITH THE PERMISSION OF KING DASHARATHA, RAMA AND LAXMANA WERE BROUGHT TO THE JUNGLE. ONE DAY –


RAMA! HERE COMES THE DEMONESS TATAKA.

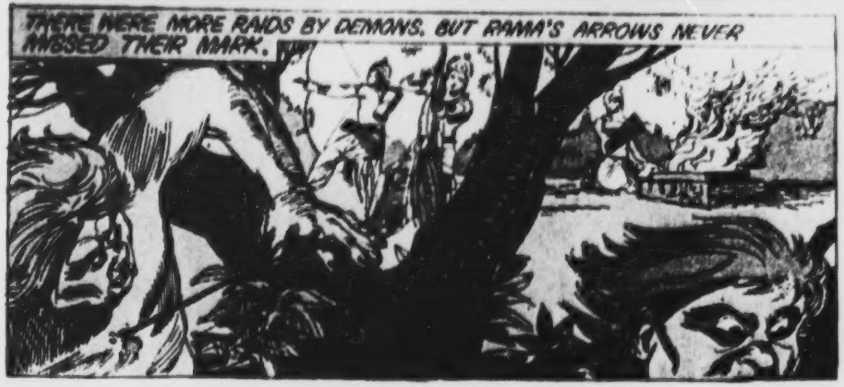
THERE WAS A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN TATAKA AND RAMA.



AND FINALLY –



THERE WERE MORE RAIDS BY DEMONS. BUT RAMA'S ARROWS NEVER MISSED THEIR MARK.



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# Indian Cultural Heroes in the Indian Epic
## An Integrated Lesson: Social Studies & English

### UNIT 6, LESSON 1

**Performance Objectives: Students Will be Able to**

- identify the heroes of the *Ramayana*.
- show how the heroes of the *Ramayana* have affected the religion, culture and history of India.
- analyze the qualities of the heroes of the *Ramayana*.
- compare and contrast Indian cultural heroes from literature, history and society.

**Teacher Background**

*Throughout history, all cultures have held similar values and "worshiped" cultural heroes. India is no exception. In the 2500 year old epic,* **Ramayana**, *India's values and cultural heroes are portrayed through a series of colorful and impressive characters. This masterpiece of literature is both a folk tale that has a rich oral tradition and is performed throughout South Asia and a story of deep religious devotion.*

*The purpose of this lesson is to show the linkages - the similarities and differences of the Indian idea of "hero" with those of history and our own culture and to take a look at how this piece of literature has influenced the religion, culture and history of South Asia.*

**Springboard**

- Teacher will develop a **semantic map** for the word **HERO**. Discuss questions with students.

  - How would you define the word "hero"?
  - What are some qualities, traits or characteristics that you would associate with heroes?
  - Why are heroes important to people?
  - Who are some of your heroes from your personal life, sports, history, literature?
  - What examples do you have of heroes in today's world?
  - Nations and regions have their own specific heroes. Create a list of heroes from different cultures (either inside or outside the U.S.).

- Break students into groups of 4. Discuss and identify the qualities of heroes that prompted them to identify the people that they did. Once they have reached consensus on 6 characteristics, distribute **Worksheet 1: Characteristics of a Hero.**

- Teacher will elicit responses from class on the characteristics of a hero. These responses will serve as the basis for **any** of the following Procedure Activities I, II, or III.

**Procedures**

*This lesson is designed to be done concurrently in several classrooms. It can also be accomplished in a single classroom or be used as a supplementary or enrichment lesson for other units which may not specifically deal with Ramayana. Therefore, the teacher has several options and/or activities from which to choose.*

113

## I. WRITING PROJECT

Students should be able to complete one or both of the following essays:

A. In literature, common themes frequently emerge regarding heroes. Select any three themes from the below list and explain how each theme relates to a hero of the *Ramayana* and a hero from any other literary work this year. [Do not use any of the same characters twice.]

- Journey of a hero
- Hero doing something he/she doesn't want to do
- Hero learning from mistakes/gaining knowledge
- Hero's intelligence
- Hero chooses good over evil
- Hero's relationship with nature

**B.** Write a personal essay describing who your hero(es) is. Your essay should include all of the following:

- Explanation of how this person came to be your hero
- Discussion of the person's heroic qualities
- Understanding of what your choice of a hero tells about you

## II. LITERATURE PROJECT

The legend of the *Ramayana* is a wonderful story and several versions and mediums are readily available for student use. Some examples are suggested below.

- *The Ramayana,* R. K. Narayan, NY, NY:. Penguin Books. A shortened, modern prose version of the Indian epic and is very readable for the 9th grade student.
- *The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki.* Swami Venkatesananda. State University of New York Press, ISBN #0-88706-863-4 (paperback) is difficult to read and should be read by only the sophisticated reader.
- *Lord Rama,* Dr. B.R. Kishore available from Nataraj Books, P.O. Box 5076, Springfield, VA 22150 is a very readable pamphlet summarizing the epic.
- *Rama,* Anant Pai (ed) is a comic-book version of the epic based on the Tulsidas version and available from Nataraj Books.

After reading all or some part of a version of *The Ramayana* students should be able to discuss some of the qualities that the heroes of the epic possessed and showed and compare them with their original idea of a "hero." Sample passages may be highlighted for a classroom discussion and/or comparison.

## III. Performance Activity

A. Students could put on a puppet show of *Ramayana* for the class. Students will write their own script which can follow *Ramayana* script or adapt script to tell a different story. See **Worksheet 4.**

B. Students could write and illustrate their own storybook telling the story of *Ramayana.*

C. Students could present a storytelling demonstration for younger grades.

D. Students could have a Dussehra festival (**Worksheet 2**) in their classroom. This would be an excellent method to introduce the ancient and beloved Hindu story with its message of loyalty and the triumph of good over evil.

E. Students could write the script, create the puppets and perform the *Ramayana* for adult audiences or at Senior Citizen homes.

F. Students can use prepared script in **Worksheet 3**.

**Summary/Application**
Any of the topics suggested above would be a suitable culminating activity for a unit on *Ramayana*. Students could earn both individual and group grades for their participation in the project.

## Worksheet 1: Characteristics of a Hero

**Directions**: Students are to list the six characteristics of a cultural hero and give at least one specific example of someone from literature and/or history who exemplifies that specific characteristic.

| Characteristics of a HERO | Specific Example |
|---|---|
| ❶ | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. |
| ❷ | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. |
| ❸ | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. |
| ❹ | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. |
| ❺ | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. |
| ❻ | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4. |

## Worksheet 2: Dussehra Festival

The purpose of this festival is to introduce the ancient and beloved Hindu story, *Ramayana,* with its message of loyalty and the triumph of good over evil.

### The plan has five stages

**① Gathering**
**② Hearing the story of Prince Rama and Ravana, the Demon with Ten Heads**
**③ Making stick puppets of the characters**
**④ Enacting the story with the puppets**
**⑤ Celebrating with the burning of Ravana (evil).**

### Planning Ahead

- Burning of Ravana supplies
    - illustration of Ravana (see puppet pages), duplicated and cut out matches and taper
    - safe container for the burning, such as a glass, ovenproof mixingbowl
    - water in container(s) as a fire safety precaution

### Puppet Supplies

- rubber cement
- tongue depressors or coffee stirrers masking tape
- scissors
- pencil type felt markers or crayons or colored pencils
- heavy paper like oak tag or heavy white construction paper (stiff enough paper for the puppet to stand up)

## Worksheet 3: Rama and the Demon with Ten Heads - The Puppet Play Story

*(Dussehra, Brotman - Marshfield, Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalists, 1983)*

Once there was a demon who had ten heads. ** *(Hold up puppet Ravana)*

This demon, named Ravana, was king of a large island. Long ago, he had gotten one of the great gods to promise him that he could never be killed by any god or demon. As soon as he knew that none of them could harm him, he did every evil thing he wanted to do. He threatened to conquer the earth below, and all the gods in heaven.

What could the gods do about Ravana? Finally, a great God, Vishnu, had a plan. He knew that Ravana had not asked to be kept safe from humans or monkeys, so he decided to come to earth himself as a human, and he asked other gods to be born as monkeys.

At this time there was an old king with three wives and no sons who desperately wanted an heir. ***(Hold up puppet Old King)*

Vishnu caused himself to be born as a son to the old king. The king named this son, Rama. The king had three other sons named Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna, but he loved Rama the most. He wanted Rama to be the king after he died.

Rama grew up to be a fine, strong, young man. ***(Hold up puppet Rama)*

He married a beautiful woman named Sita. ***(Hold up puppet Sita)*

The old king's third wife, Kaikeyi, did not want Rama to become king. ***(puppet Kaikeyi)*

She wanted her own son, Bharata, to become king. She remembered that the old king had once promised to grant her two wishes, because she had saved his life. She decided that the time had come to ask for those two wishes.

She said to the king, "My first wish is that you crown my son, Bharata, as king, instead of Rama." ***(Hold up puppet Bharata)*

"My second wish is that you send Rama into the forest for fourteen years."

The old king was stunned and grieved, but he had to grant the wishes, because he had made the promise. Rama said, "Don't be sad, father. I will carry out your promise. My brother, Bharata, will make a good king. I will leave as soon as I have said my farewells."

Lakshmana was furious at what Kaikeyi had done. ***(Hold up puppet Lakshmana)*

He said to Rama, "You are the true king! I will kill Queen Kaikeyi for doing this."

"No," said Rama, gently, "You must not do such a thing!"

Lakshmana said, "Then I shall go with you into the forest."

Sita, Rama's wife, said, "I will come, too."

Rama said, "But, Sita, the forest is full of dangers."

Sita answered, "If you are banished to the forest, I will be banished, too. I will go wherever you go."

So Rama left for the forest with his wife, Sita, and his brother, Lakshmana. After they left, the old king was so heartbroken that he died of sorrow. Bharata had been away on a trip and did not know about all of this. When he returned, he was angry at his mother for what she had done.

"That is not right!" he said, "Rama must be brought back as king!"

Bharata went to the forest and found Rama. "Come back." he said.

But Rama answered, "Would you want me to break our father's promise? No, I cannot come back for fourteen years. People should follow the path of truth and never go back on their word. People must do their best to live by what is right."

Bharata said, "Then I shall rule for you for fourteen years, but I will refuse to be crowned king. Give me your sandals to place on the throne. In that way, everyone will know you are really the king."

Then Bharata sadly returned to the palace. The years went by in the forest. The ten-headed demon, Ravana, wanted to kidnap Sita, but he was afraid of Rama. Finally, he thought of a plot to trick Rama and Sita.

He sent a demon in the form of a golden deer. When Sita saw the golden deer, she asked Rama to capture it for her for a pet. Rama went after the deer, but it led him far away. Then the demon imitated Rama's voice, calling, "Help.' Help.'"

Sita said to the brother, Lakshmana, "You must go help Rama! He's in trouble.'"

As soon as she was alone, the ten-headed demon, Ravana, appeared. Sita fainted with fright. Ravana scooped her up and flew off with her.

Sita came out of her faint as they flew over the forest. She knew she must leave something behind to help Rama find her, so she quickly pulled off all her jewels and threw them to the ground.

Her jewels were found by the king of the monkeys, Hanuman. ***(puppet Hanuman)***

Ravana carried Sita to his palace on his island. He locked her up in a garden and said, "You have twelve months time to agree to become my queen. If you refuse, I will kill you!"

Rama roamed the forest looking for Sita. He called out, "Sita! Sita!" over and over, but he could not find her. He was very sad. Then the Monkey King came running up to Rama, holding out Sita's jewels.

"I will help you," said the Monkey King. "I will order my army of monkeys and bears to search the world over. "

The Monkey King and his army traveled until they reached the ocean. They could see Ravana's island across the water, but how could they get there?

The Monkey King had special powers, because he was really the son of the wind God. He turned himself into a giant so that he could leap over the water. Then he became small again, and looked around for Sita. He found her in the garden.

Just then, Ravana's soldiers captured the Monkey King, and dragged him before Ravana. Ravana gave orders to set the monkey's tail on fire. The Monkey King leaped into the air and used his flaming tail to set fire to the whole city, and then he leaped over the ocean to Rama.

The monkey army then built a bridge across the sea to the island. Rama and all the monkeys crossed the bridge and battled the demon's soldiers. ***(Hold up the demon puppet)***

Then began the greatest battle of all--it was between Rama and Ravana. They fought for ten days. Rama cut off two of Ravana's heads, but to his surprise, the heads grew right back. Rama heard that there was only one place on Ravana's body where he could be hit and killed, and this was in his belly.

Rama would not hit Ravana below the belt, because he felt this was not a fair way to fight. The Monkey King prayed to his father, the Wind God for help. The Wind God made one of Rama's arrows turn down to hit Ravana in the secret spot, and Ravana fell down and died.

Rama could now return to his own kingdom with Sita and his brother. His fourteen years had just ended. He was at last crowned king!

**Goodness has won over evil!**

## Worksheet 4: A Scene Guide for the Puppet Play

A stage is unnecessary; use a table top or floor space. A scene guide follows:

**Scene 1** (In the Palace) KAIKEYI DEMANDS TWO WISHES
**Characters** Old King, Kaikeyi, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana
**Action:** Kaikeyi demands her two promises. King calls Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and announces decree. Lakshmana threatens to kill Kaikeyi. Rama restrains him, says, "I will go into the forest for fourteen years." Sita and Lakshmana go also, in spite of dangers. Farewells.

**Scene 2** (In the forest) RAMA IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE
**Characters** Bharata, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana
**Action:** Bharata calls out for Rama. Rama: "Here we are." Bharata: 'Our father, the King, has died of a broken heart. Come home and be king." Rama refuses. He will keep his promise. Bharata: "Then I will serve in your place, but I will put your sandals on the throne."

**Scene 3** (In the forest) THE DEMON, RAVANA, STRIKES
**Characters** A Golden Deer, Sita, Rama, Lakshmana, Ravana, Hanuman
**Action:** Sita, Rama, Lakshmana in forest. Sita sees deer, wants it, and asks Rama to catch it. He chases it. Cries of "Help! Help!" Lakshmana runs off to help Rama. Ravana appears to Sita. Sita screams. Ravana: "I'll carry you off to my country. You have 12 months to agree to be my queen or I'll kill you." Ravana flies off with Sita. She drops her jewels for clues. Hanuman catches them.

**Scene 4** (In the forest) THE MONKEY KING TO THE RESCUE
**Characters** Rama, Hanuman
**Action:** Rama goes through forest calling for Sita. Hanuman runs to Rama, "I found Sita's jewels." Hanuman calls the monkeys and bears to help; they search the forest until they come to the ocean. "I see an island. I will use my special powers to turn into a giant and leap over the water."

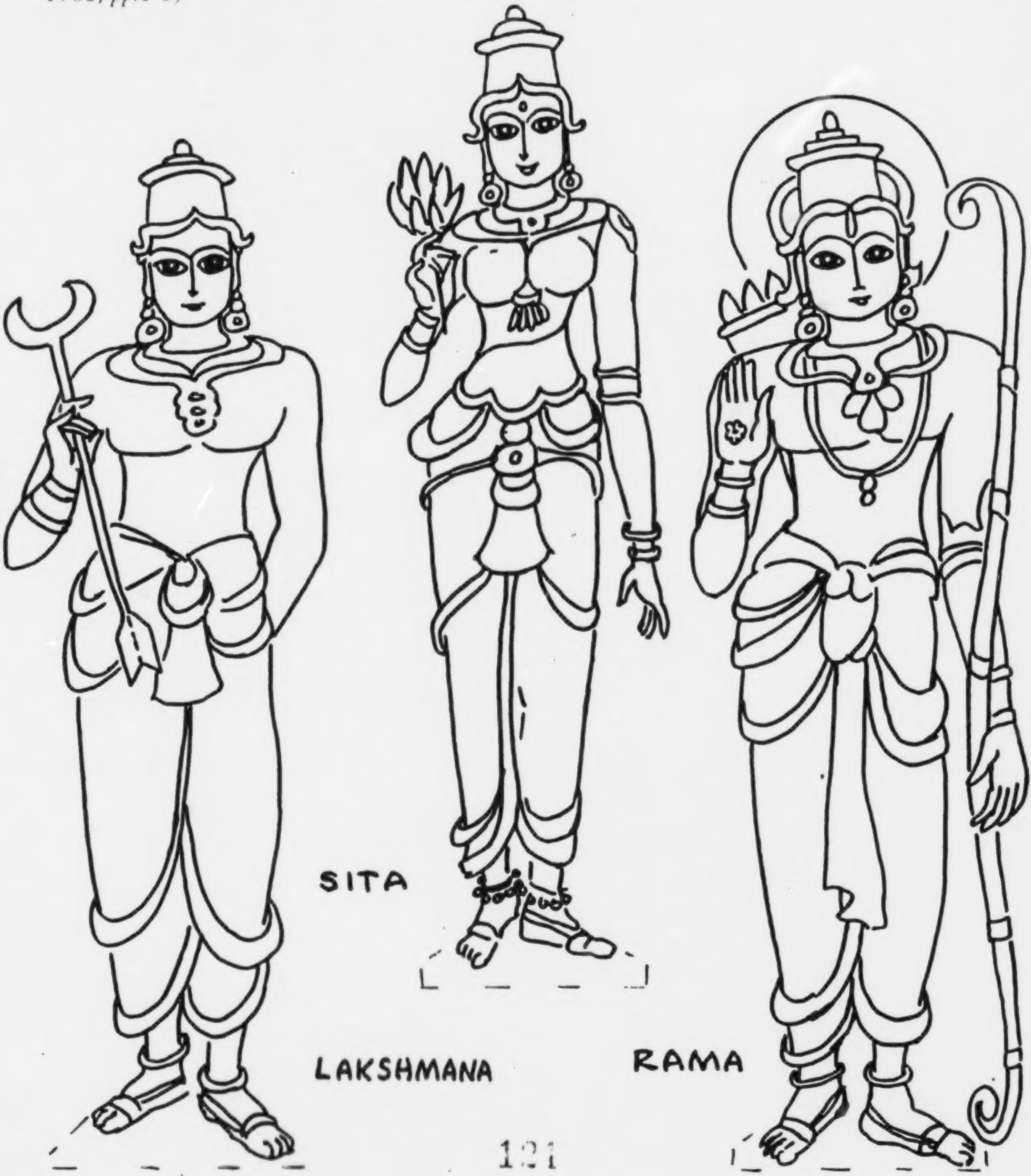
**Scene 5** (In Ravana's Palace) THE MONKEY KING IS CAPTURED
**Characters** Hanuman, Sita, Ravana, demon
**Action:** Hanuman finds Sita in the palace garden. A demon captures Hanuman and takes him to Ravana. Ravana orders the demon to set Hanuman's tall on fire. Hanuman leaps up and uses his flaming tail to set the city on fire.
**Narrator**: The Monkey King leaped back over the ocean to the forest. He, Rama, Lakshmana and the monkeys and bears built a bridge of stones over the water to Ravana's Island. Then they all crossed over the bridge to battle with Ravana and the demons.

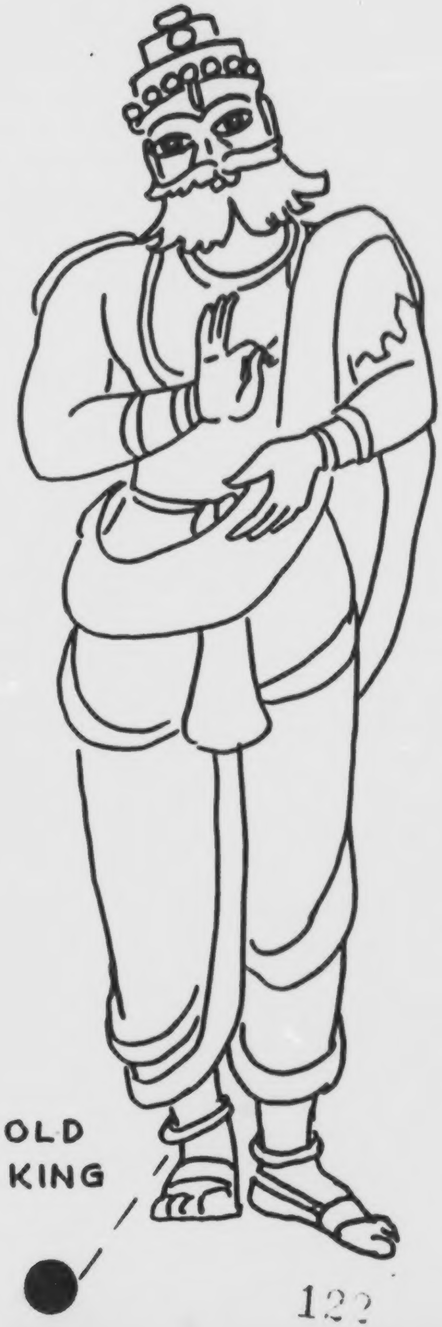
**Scene 6** (In the Land of the Demons) THE GREAT BATTLE
**Characters** Rama, Ravana, Lakshmana, demons, monkeys Hanuman
**Action:** A short battle between the good and the bad guys. Rama: "I try to cut off Ravana's heads, but new ones grow right back!" Hanuman tells Rama that the only place where Ravana can be hit and killed is his belly, but Rama says it would be unfair to hit below the belt. Hanuman asks his father, the Wind God, to blow Rama's arrow to the right spot. Ravana falls down dead.
**Narrator:** So Rama rescued his beloved and faithful Sita and they all went home, because the fourteen years had just ended. Rama was at last crowned king.

**"Goodness had triumphed over evil."**

**Worksheet 5: Puppets**

*(Puppets reprinted from Dussehra, by Brotman - Marshfield, Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalists, 1983, pp.1-6)*





OLD
KING

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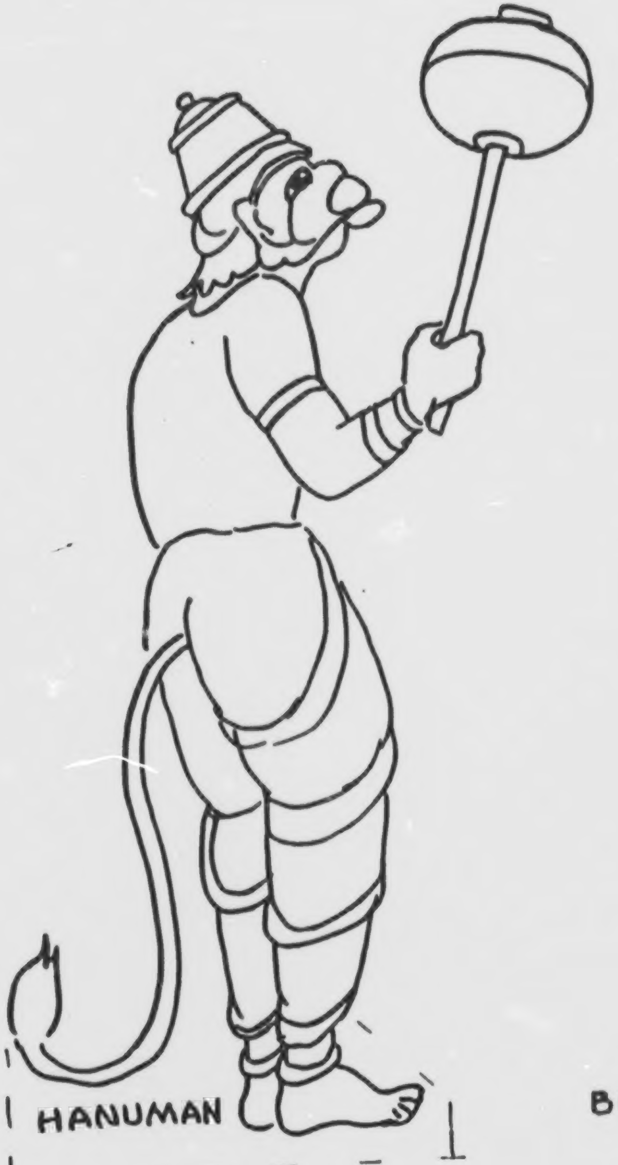
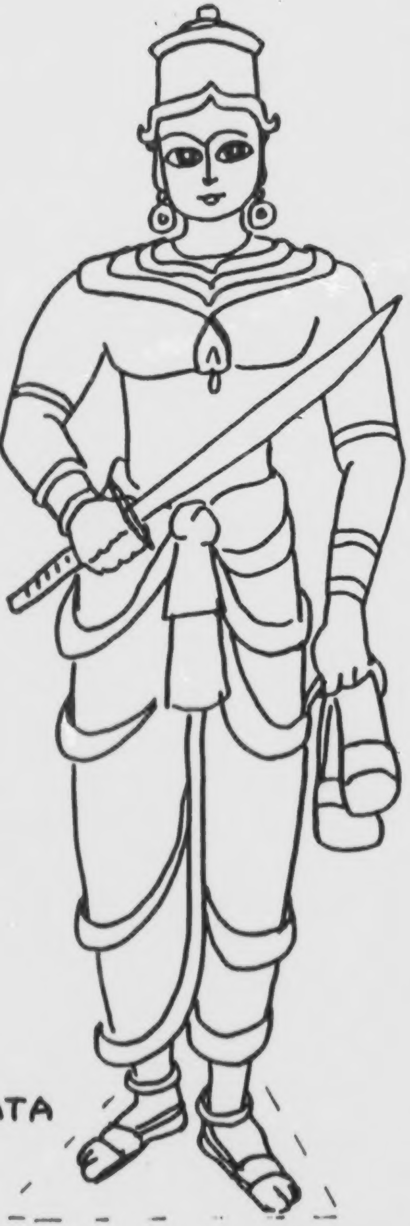


HANUMAN



BHARATA

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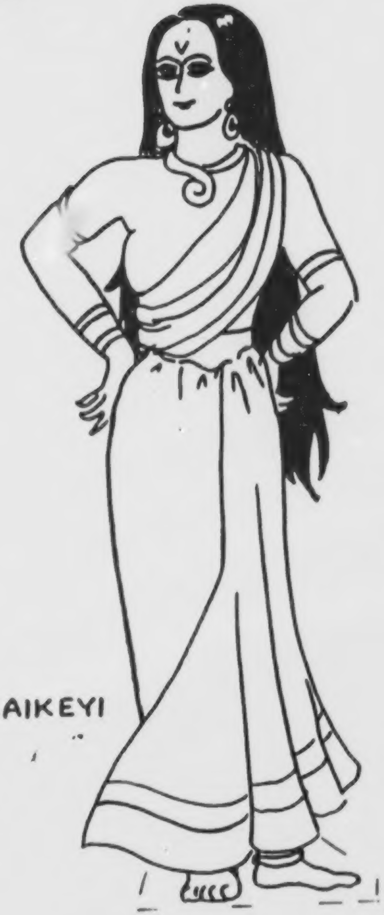

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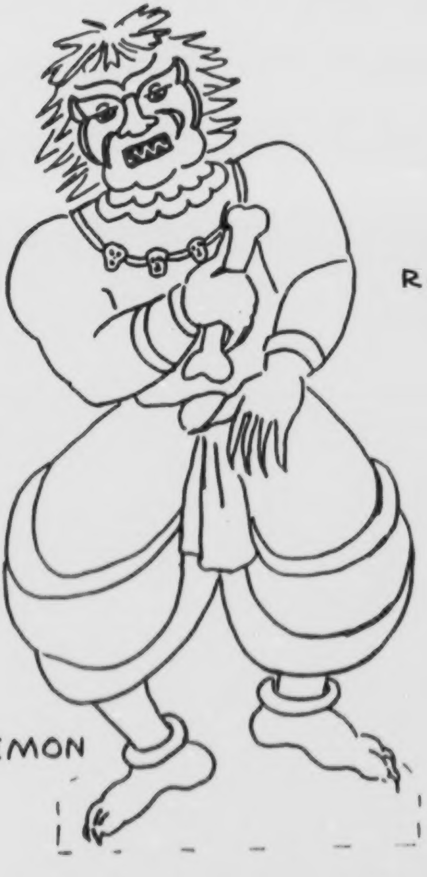

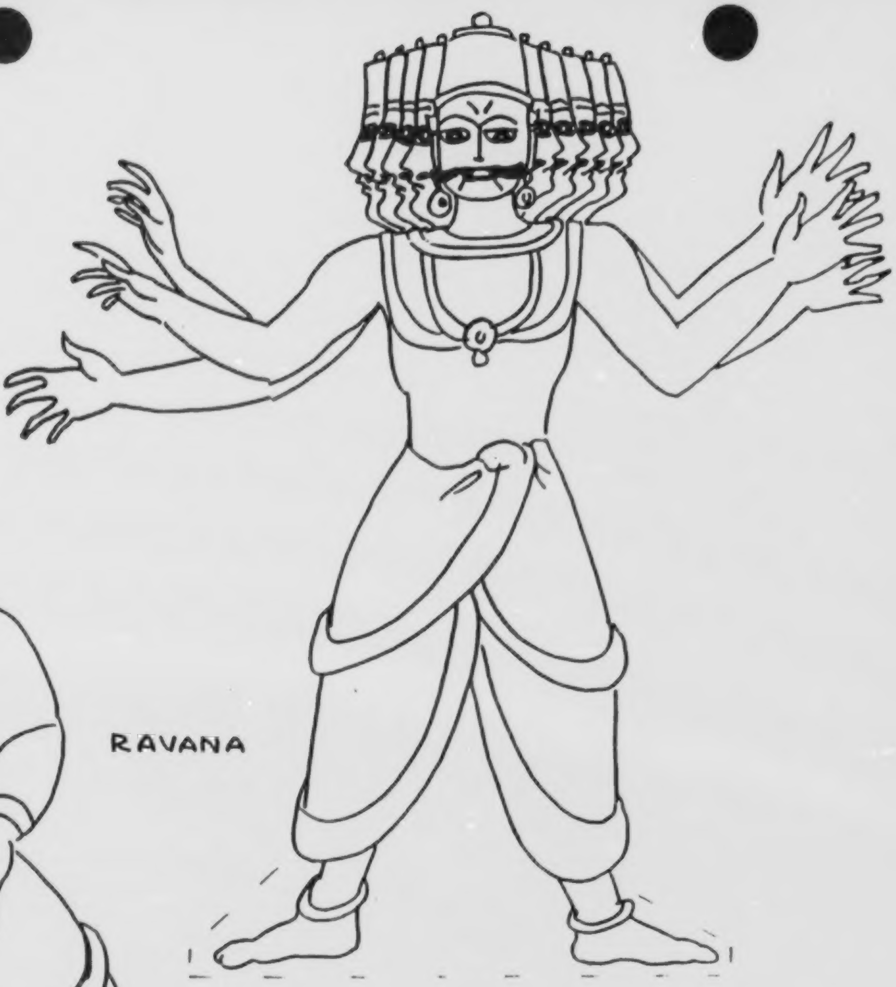

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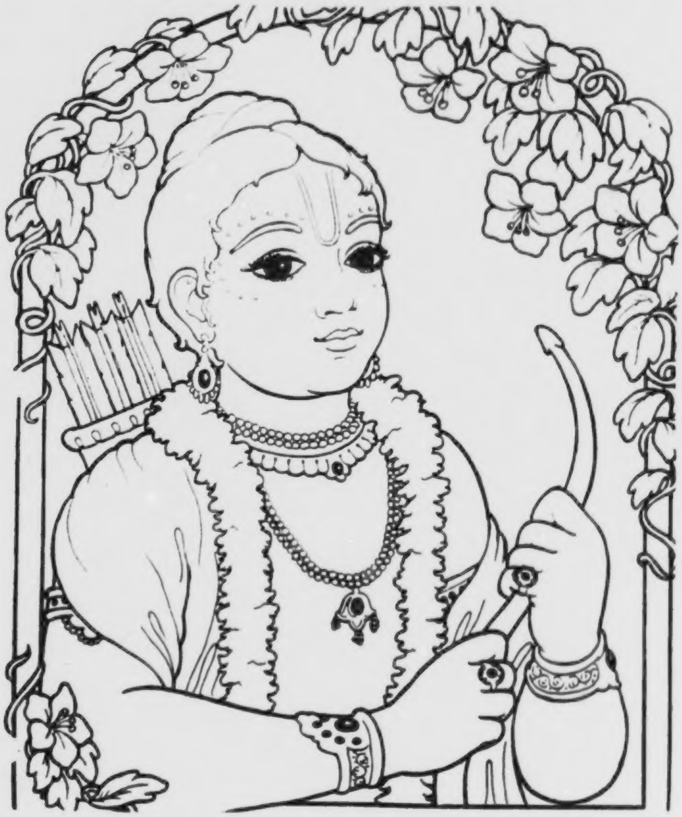
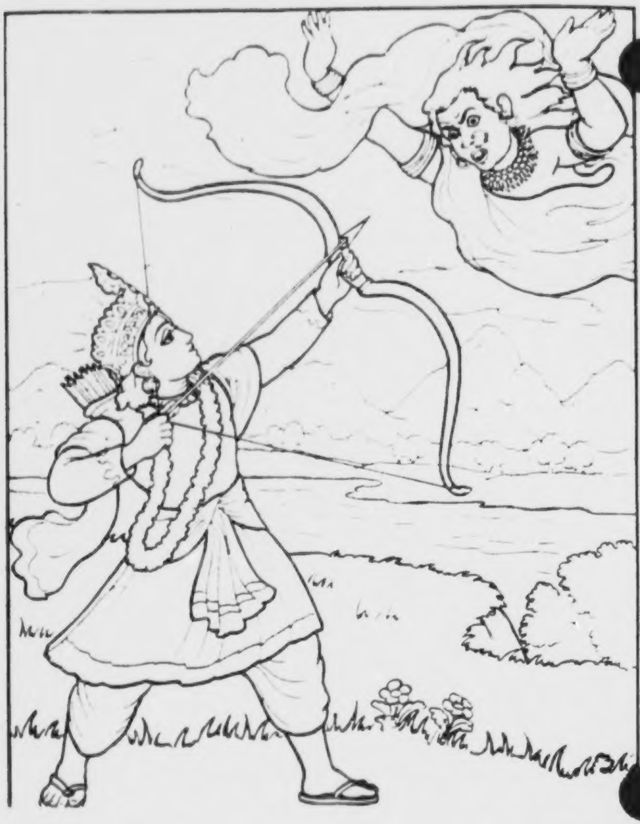
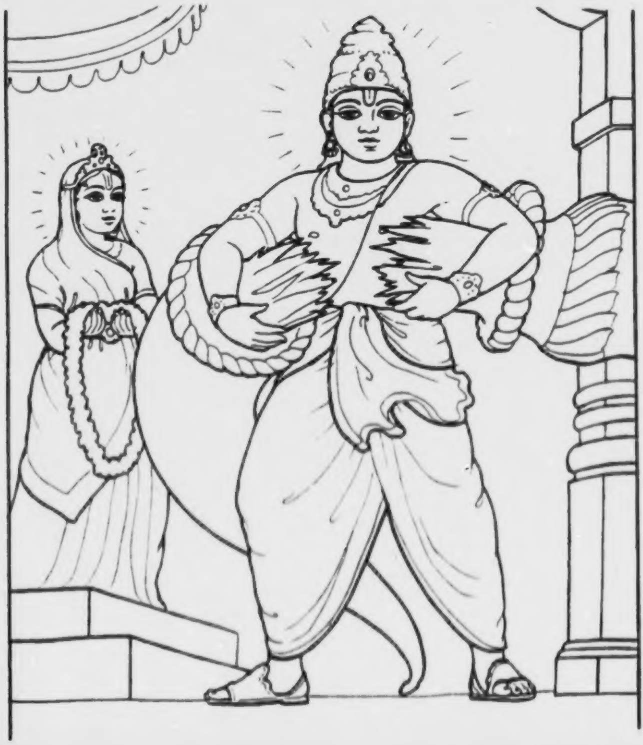
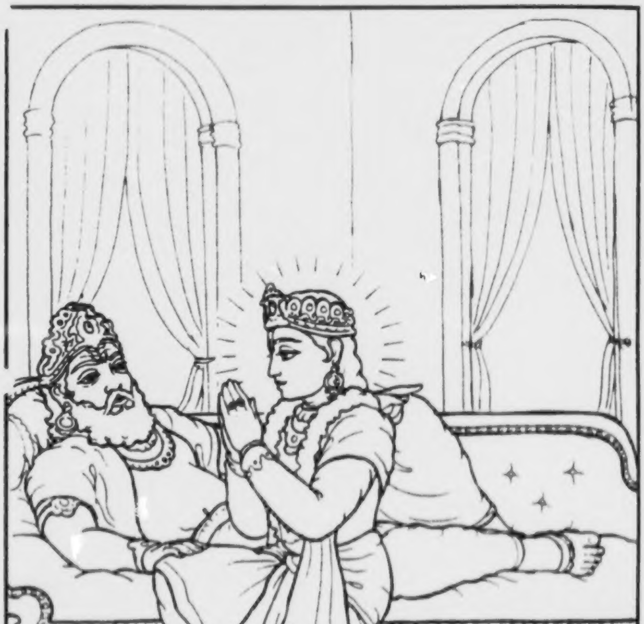
Indian Cultural Heroes in the Indian Epic

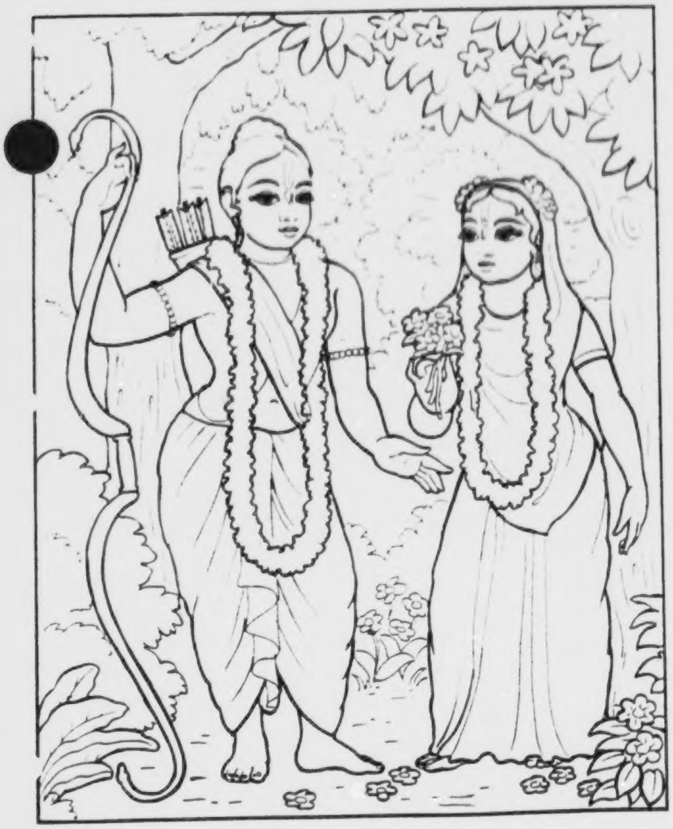
## Worksheet 6: Scene Drawings for the Play

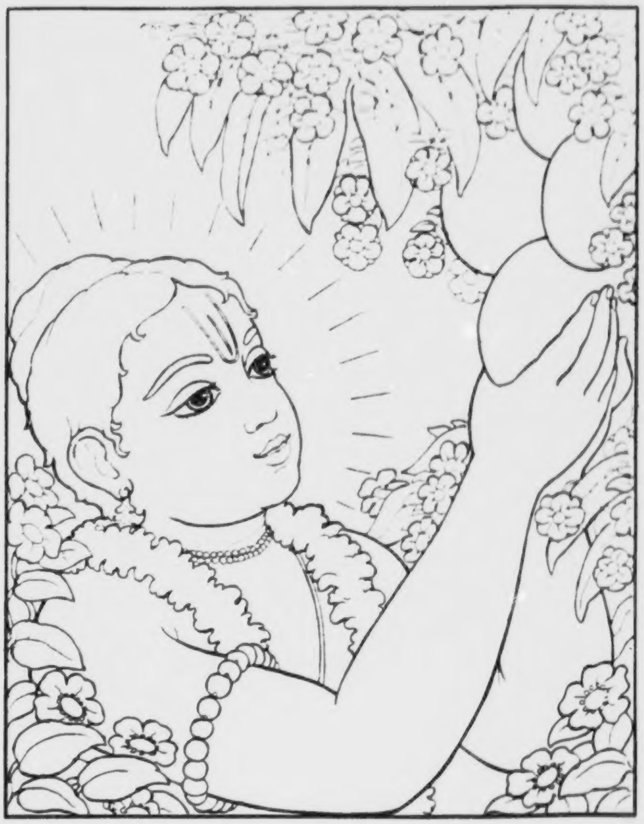


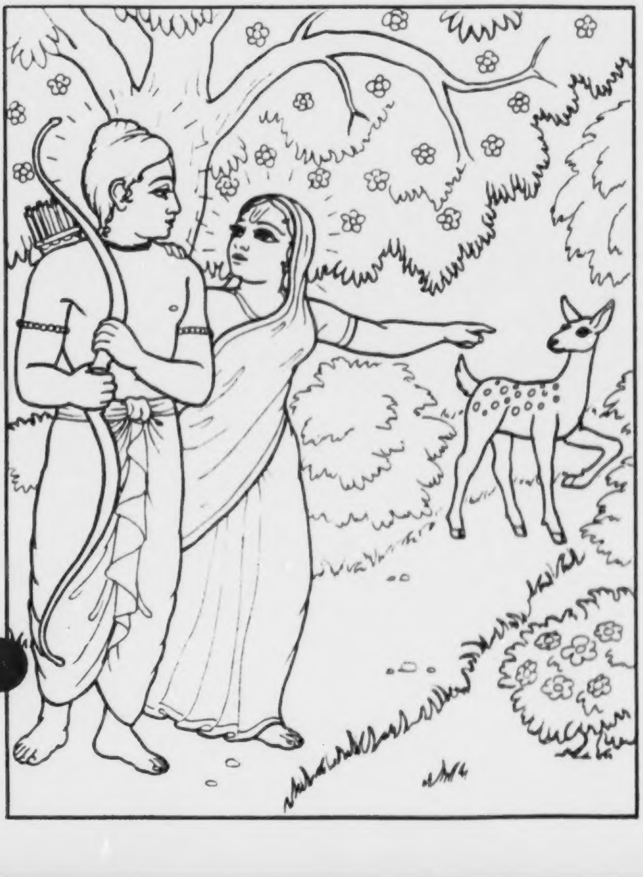


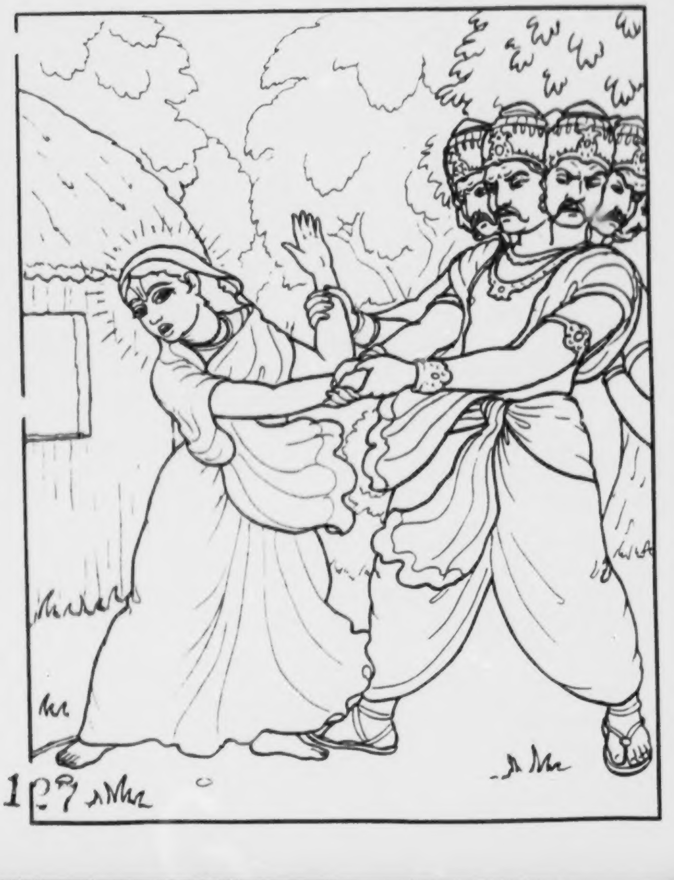


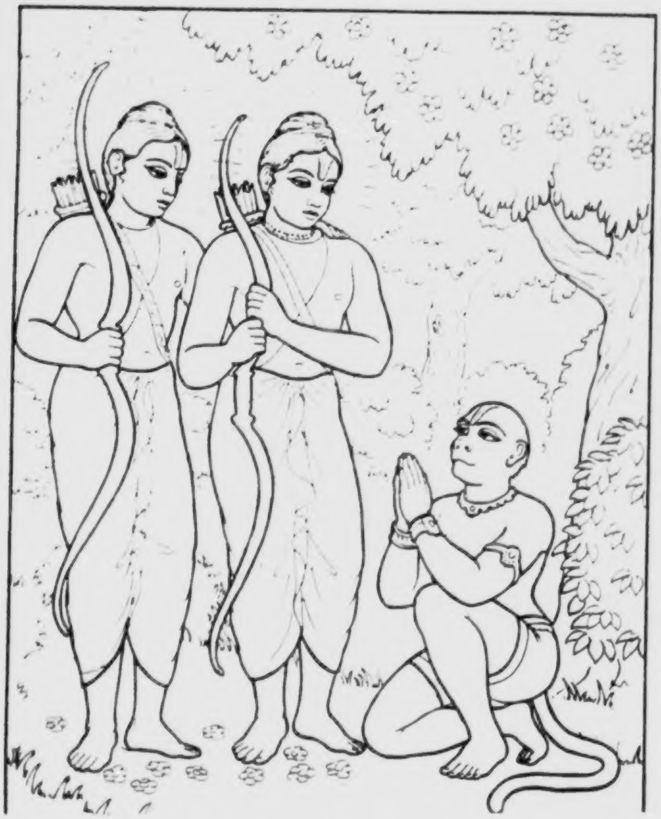


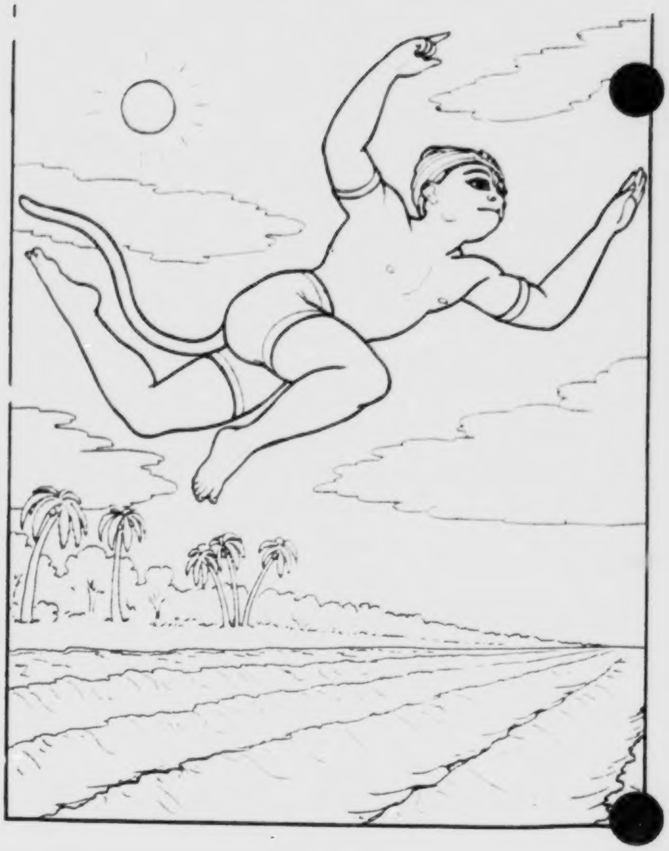


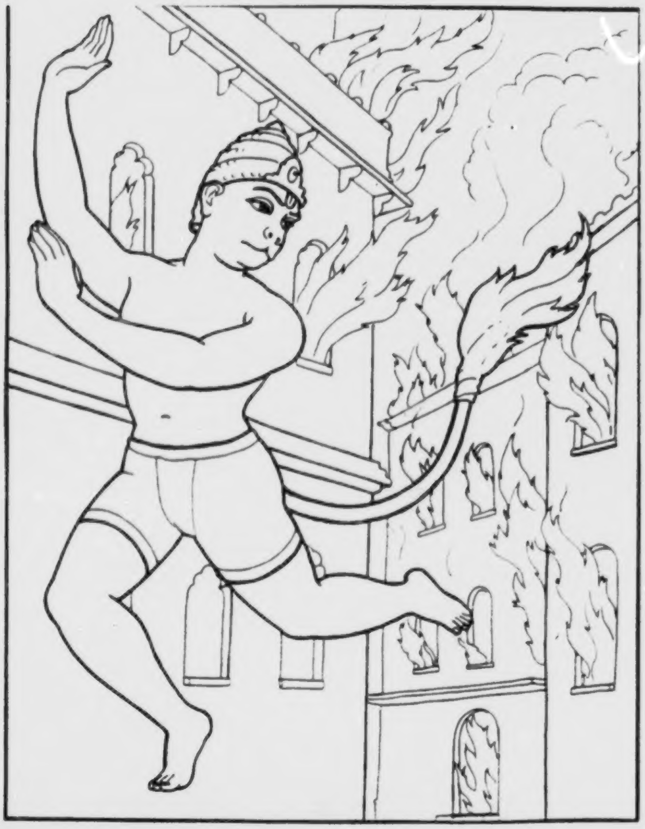


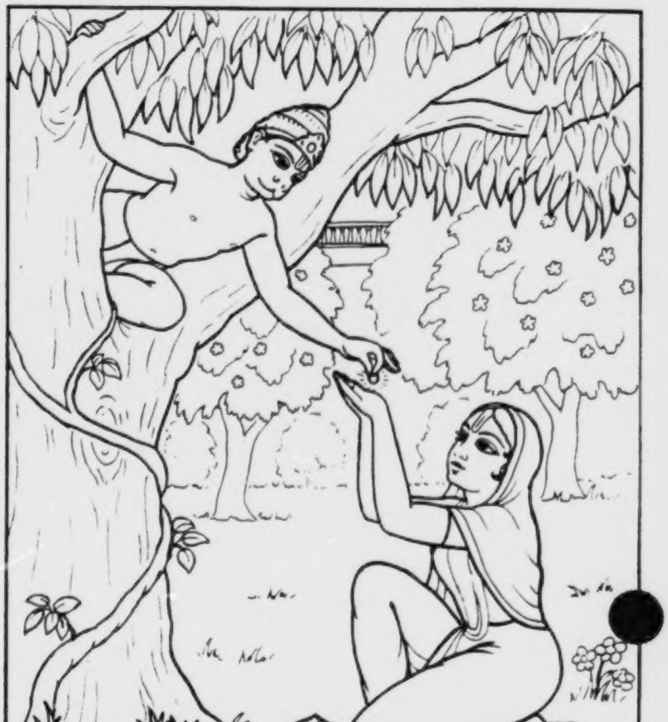


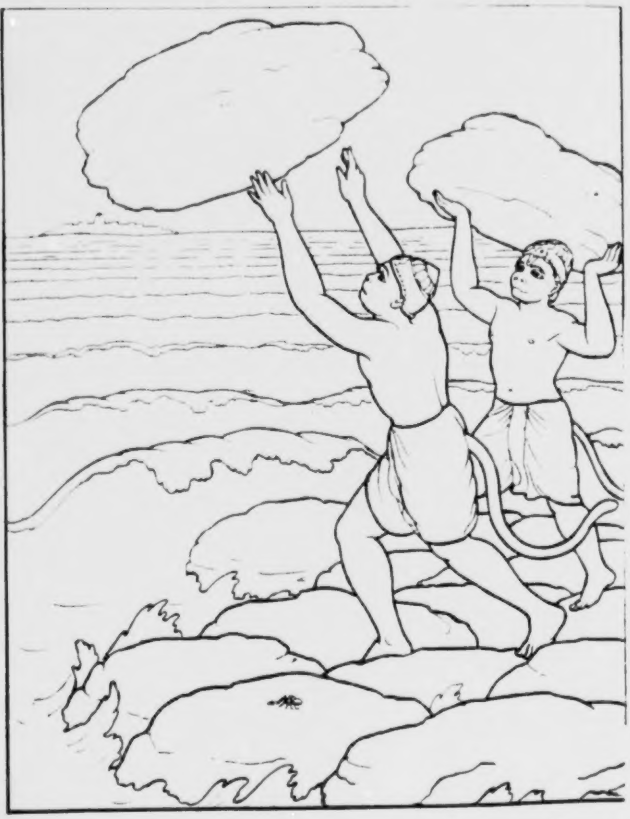


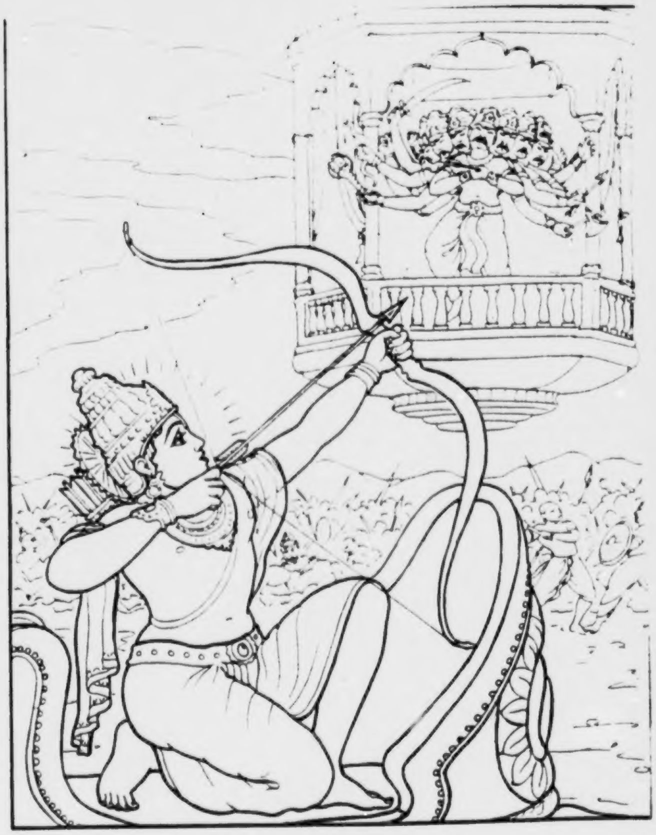


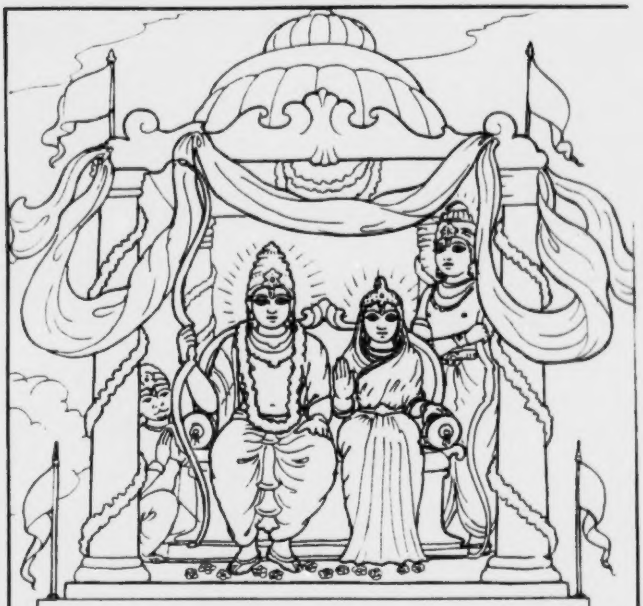












## UNIT 7, LESSON 1

These three lessons are to be used in conjunction with films and/or videos which are not included in this material packet. However, we believe the materials are easily available.

- American values: Segments from *Rosanne, Grace Under Fire, The Cosby Show*, or any other "sit-com" which might exemplify the values the teacher wishes to stress.
- South Asian values: Segments from TV *Ramayana* which appeared on Indian TV (available in Video stores and Indian-American food stores); any films and videos listed in this publication or the University of Wisconsin or Syracuse University South Asia Outreach Center; any local film library or local college or university.

### Focus Question: How Does the Media Exemplify or Interpret the Values of a Culture?

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- compare and contrast values in American and South Asian society
- list four major Hindu values exemplified in the films
- assess how the media mirrors and manipulates Indian society

### Teacher Background

*The material in this guide has examined South Asian society from many vantage points: geography, caste system, karma and dharma, Hinduism, the joint family and the role of women. In all these lessons, materials have been provided to assist the students with a better understanding of the topic. However, the media looks at the same material from another point of view. In American society, as in South Asian society, popular culture reflects and deflects the values of the society. It is important for students to see this alternate perspective. It is also important for students to realize that different groups in society have different values and they change over time.*

*N.B. These lessons require that students keep logs as homework assignments. The logs will be based on the viewing and the attached viewing sheets.*

### Procedure (DAY 1)

- Teacher will distribute 2 copies of **Worksheet 1: Viewing a Film**. Teacher will then select some American "sit-com." Student will watch a ten-minute segment. Students will be allowed an additional 10 minutes at conclusion of viewing to complete the sheet.

- Teacher will now show a ten-minute segment from a South Asian film or segment of the video *Spotlight on Ramayana*. Students will complete the viewing sheet and be allowed additional time. With any remaining time, students will meet in small groups to discuss how they reacted to the two videos.

### Summary/Homework

In their logs, using either a **Learning Log** format or any format which is comfortable, students will explain what they learned about each society.

### Procedure (DAY 2)

▸ Students will be called upon to read from their logs. Teacher will list as many values as possible on chalkboard. There will be two lists:

| AMERICAN VALUES | SOUTH ASIAN VALUES |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

- How did the video we watched in class reinforce what you already knew about American values?
- Does everyone in America have the same values? Why? or Why not? How have they changed over time?
- How did the second video reinforce what we have discussed about South Asia?
- Does everyone in South Asia have the same values? How have they changed over time? Why?

▸ Teacher will divide the class into **cooperative learning groups** of 4 students each.

- Four groups will develop a presentation (role play, puppet show, play, poem, cartoon, interview format, debate, poster, etc.) on the desirability of living in American society. Groups may work independently or with other groups for a "grander" presentation.
- Four groups will develop a presentation (role play, puppet show, play, poem, cartoon, interview format, debate, poster, etc.) on the desirability of living in South Asian society. Groups may work independently or with other groups for a"grander" presentation.

Teacher will act as a facilitator, working individually with each group.

### Procedure (DAY 3)

▸ Student groups will be called upon to make their presentations. Teacher should try to complete all presentations within one period. While the presentations are being made, students will take notes on the values exemplified by each group.

✎ At the conclusion of the activity, students will complete the following exercise in their logs:

I think (American) (Indian) society has more preferable values because ________________.
The media has influenced my opinion by ________________________________________.
I would make the following additions or corrections: ________________________________.

▸ Students will share their responses with the class.

## How Does the Media Exemplify or Interpret the Values of a Culture?

### Worksheet 1: Viewing a Film

Name of Program: ______________________________

Characters: ______________________________

As briefly as possible, explain how the video/film portrays each of the following:

**Family roles** ______________________________

**Peer Relationships** ______________________________

**Women's Roles** ______________________________

**Social Class Problems** ______________________________

**Sexual Issues** ______________________________

**Other Comments** ______________________________

# Chapter III

## To What Degree Does Ramayana Help Us Comprehend Hindu Values and Religion?

# Symbolism in Indian Religion: Focus on the Ramayana

## UNIT 8

### Focus Question: How Can a Study of Ramayana Help us Develop an Understanding of the Symbolism in Indian and Hindu culture?

### Performance Objectives

- analyze the role of *Ramayana* in perpetuating basic Hindu values
- evaluate the regional differences among the many *Ramayanas*
- discuss the diversity found in the many *Ramayanas* and South Asian society
- appreciate the prose and pageantry of *Ramayana* as a play/folklore
- construct their own *Ramayana*, using the materials provided.

### Teacher Background

*(Although the students will have read the abbreviated version of the Ramayana, the complexity of the text may make it difficult for some students to comprehend. This lesson is designed for those students who need to "re-visit" the text, using visuals to make it come alive for them. In some case, if there is a shortage of time or the text is being used only in a social studies classroom, this may be the sole example of the narrative that the students receive.)*

> *"SYMBOLS AND ART ARE THE FACE OF A CULTURE; ONLY BY UNDERSTANDING THE SYMBOLS AND ART OF A CULTURE CAN WE KNOW A CULTURE."*

*Symbolism in India serves a very dominant role in the peoples' lives. Hinduism is filled with symbolism, accounting for its wonderful stories and artwork. By studying the symbolism present in South Asian culture, one can gain a greater appreciation for Hinduism and the culture as a whole. The Ramayana plays an important role in illustrating much of the impact of symbols and the values they reinforce.*

*Through a study of the Ramayana, it is possible to see dharma and karma explained in an understandable and enjoyable way. The person will also gain an understanding of the importance of these concepts in the lives of a Hindu, and why change is often very gradual.*

*These lessons will allow the students to experience the major impact that symbolism has had and continues to have on Indian life and Hindus in particular. Through the use of colorful and animated stories, the many pictorials and graphics will bring these ideas alive.*

## UNIT 8, LESSON 1

**Focus Question: What role do symbols and deities play in the culture/religion in India?**

**Performance Objectives: Students Will be able to:**

- identify the major deities and idols found in South Asian mythology.
- discuss the importance of symbolism in a culture, specifically the Indian/Hindu culture.
- compare and contrast the differences in artwork and determine why there are differences in style.

### Springboard

Place the following quote on overhead:

> *A Hindu and a Christian were talking one night about the* ***Ramayana*** *and the birth of Christ.*
>
> *The Christian asked, "Why do you place such emphasis on an epic called* ***Ramayana****? It is only a story about ideals and values and symbols."*
>
> *The Hindu responded, "Why do you place such an emphasis on the story of Jesus? It is only a story about ideals and values and symbols."*

✎ In their notebooks, students will write a short response to the statement.

- What does this tell us about the role of the *Ramayana* in Hindu society as compared to the story of Jesus in Christian society?

### Procedure

- Teacher will divide the class into groups of four. Once the groups are created, teacher will ask about the importance of symbolism in a culture/religion. Responses will be placed on chalkboard.

- Students will select a culture/religion with which they are familiar. They will then determine how many of the responses on the board are applicable. (e.g. cross in Christianity; star of David; crescent of Islam; Christian traditions)

- Place quotes on chalkboard:

> *"Only human beings can conceptualize symbols and apply meaning to them."*
> *"Human beings are superior to all species because they generate symbols and apply concepts to them."*

- How do these quotes sum up the importance and uniqueness of symbols in human culture/religion?

- Distribute **Worksheet 1: Symbolism in South Asian Religion**. Allow students time to read worksheet and complete exercise. Review **monistic** and **polytheistic** with class. Allow students time to discuss each term fully.

Today we are going to use graphics to tell a story...the story of Rama, Sita and Ravana. They are considered gods by many South Asians. However, before we begin our activity, let us do a sample together.

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 2: The Trinity**. Discuss reading with students.

- Based upon this reading, would you consider Hinduism monistic or polytheistic? Why? Explain your answer.

We are now going to look at *Ramayana* in word and picture.

▸ Each group will receive a copy of **Worksheet 3: The Story of Rama**, and **Worksheet 4: The Story of Rama in Pictures**. This is a **cloze exercise**, using graphics rather than words. The task is to insert the graphic in the appropriate letter so that the story can be understood in words and pictures.

***(An alternate method of doing the same activity is to divide the story into segments and provide each group with the appropriate graphics for their segment. If there are six groups, each group would receive about nine graphics. This would greatly expedite the classroom work and not appear as daunting to students.***

***Once the students have completed their portion of the narrative, they can walk around the room to find out where they "fit" in the total story. Then students can check for correctness.)***

### Summary/Evaluation

▸ Have students exchange their packets with each other. Teacher will review answers, using an overhead projector.

- Who is your favorite deity and why?
- What values do they represent?
- Did that have an impact on your decision?
- How are certain Indian values represented by the gods and deities?
- Why do humans use symbols and idols to express values and beliefs?

**What Role do Symbols and Deities Play in the Culture/Religion in India?**

**Worksheet 1: Symbolism in South Asian Religion: Focus on Ramayana**

## "God is All and All is God."

Hinduism is basically a **monistic** belief system, but this is an idea that is thought about by only the most learned of Hindu scholars and philosophers. Most people like to have a more obvious and personal *deity* (god) to worship. Thus, Hinduism is also **polytheistic**. In fact, Hinduism has taken on the character of a universal religion, accepting all beliefs as part of the idea that "God is One, but wise people know it by many names."

The many different gods of Hinduism represent the different aspects of the **one** (God or *Brahman*) which humans can experience. In early Indian history, these deities represented obvious forces of existence: *Agni* (fire), *Indra* (storms), *Surya* (the sun), and *Soma* (intoxicating drink).

As Hinduism developed, however, the gods began to represent human character traits as well as the natural forces. In the words of former Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, "For centuries, (the tales of Hindu gods and goddesses have exemplified the) highest aspirations (of the Indian) people, giving them a faith to live by, and models to mold the conduct of the individual."

These personalized gods act as models for the people who worship them. The stories and myths about the gods demonstrate to worshipers how to act in order to achieve *moksha* or salvation, union with the one, Brahman.

### Exercise

- Why is Hinduism called **monistic**?
- Why is Hinduism called **polytheistic**?
- According to the reading, what role do the gods play in the lives of the South Asian people?

## What Role do Symbols and Deities Play in the Culture/Religion in India?

### Worksheet 2: The Trinity

*In this worksheet, we are going to learn about the Hindu Trinity. At the same time, we are going to see a model of the activity we will follow as we study* ***Ramayana****. You will notice that graphics are inserted throughout the text and serve as another way for us to learn about the gods of India.*

The three major Hindu gods, **Brahma**, **Vishnu** and **Shiva** have come to represent the universal forces of creation, preservation and destruction.

### Brahma

As Lord of Creation, Brahma may once have been widely worshiped, but now there are few Brahma temples. He often appears in stories of the other deities, but his time was in the distant past of the Age of Purity and Truth, the **Krita** or **Satya Yuga**. He is represented as having four heads - sometimes only three are visible - and holds beads for mediation and other articles of worship.

### Vishnu

Along with Shiva, Vishnu has become one of the two most important deities in Hinduism, and there are **Vaishnava**, nor Vishnu worshiper, temples all over India. The followers of Vishnu have made him the ONE god, and thus, in this respect, Hinduism becomes **monotheistic**. Vishnu is often pictured reclining on a huge multi-headed snake attended by his wife **Lakshmi** and accompanied by Brahma, whose job of creation he has taken over. Vishnu is also the **Preserver** and in this role he has appeared on earth at least ten times in various forms. He is sometimes pictured as **Vishwarap**, embodying every god and all elements of creation. He usually appears in times of trouble and turmoil in order to restore the balance between good and evil. In fact, some Hindus believe that all great people are **avatars** or reincarnations (reappearances) of Vishnu whose role in the world is to preserve order.

### Shiva

Shiva, the **Destroyer**, destroys but without either pleasure or pain at the destruction. Shiva's great powers are often attributed to his practice of yogic austerities. His garland of snakes and his necklace of skulls serve him well when he takes on the demons. His drum, shaped like an hour glass, measures out the beat of the universe and he uses it in his role as judge and upholder of righteousness. Shiva's destructive nature is echoed in the behavior of his consorts Kali and Durga.

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## Worksheet 3: The Story of Rama

One of the most widely known and beloved of Vishnu's avatars is **Rama**, the ideal of the wise and courageous warrior and ruler who does his duty no matter what the circumstances. *He is usually depicted with a crown and bow* **A** and his tale is celebrated in the epic drama, **Ramayana**, performed each year in cities and villages all over northern India. This celebration is part of the important **Dusshera** festival. Originally a strictly oral tradition, the story was said to be first written in verse by the learned holy man Valmiki, *after watching a hunter kill a mating bird.* **B** It is also told through *dance dramas* **C** and *shadow puppetry* **D** in Indonesia. In Thailand and Cambodia, the story is illustrated by *chalk rubbings on the walls of the temples.* **E**

In the **Treta Yuga** (Golden Age), the peace-loving gods were bedeviled by demons commanded by the powerful *ten-header **Ravana**, King of Lanka.* **F** Because of his many sacrifices and much meditation, Brahma the Creator had been flattered into granting Ravana the gift (boon) of protection before the Gods and other superhumans. In his arrogance, Ravana ignored the feeling of everyone; the *Gods pray to Vishnu to reincarnate as a human in order to control Ravanna.* **G**

Coincidentally, **King Dasharatha of Kosala**, worried at his own lack of an heir, has a holy man perform a sacred ceremony. *A divine being emerges from the ceremonial fire and presents the king with a magical potion.* **H** Each of the king's three wives drink the divine nectar, and four sons are born: to **Queen Kaikeyi, Bharata**; to **Queen Sumita**, the twins **Shatrugana** and **Laksmana**, and to **Queen Kausalya**, the eldest son, **Rama**, who is Vishnu reincarnated.

Taught to be good warriors by their wise Brahmin guru teacher, **Vashishtha**, Rama and his brother Lakshmana are recruited by **Vishvamitra** to *help fight demons who have been disturbing the forest meditations of the* ***rishis*** **I** (Holy Ones). After many successes, the sage and the young warriors hear of a great husband-choosing ceremony to be held by **King Janaka** of **Mithila**.

The beautiful **Sita** (in reality, an incarnation of Vishnu's wife, Lakshmi), was *born of Mother Earth and found by King Janaka as he ceremonially plowed the first furrow* **J** of a new planting season. Only the greatest of the Kshatriyas (warriors) would be a fit husband for her, so Janaka's magic bow, given to his ancestors by the gods would serve as a measure of worthiness - the man who could draw it would become Sita's betrothed.

All the great rulers of India try and fail to even lift the bow; when it comes Rama's turn, *he not only lifts, strings and draws it, but with his divine power snaps it in two!* **K** Thus takes place a *great wedding ceremony for Rama and Sita,* **L** as well as for Rama's three brothers who marry a sister and two cousins of Sita.

The brothers and their wives return to Ayodhya in triumph, and peace and happiness continue for many years until the King decides to give up his throne to the now wise and mature Rama. But the celebrations and delight of the royal family and the people of Ayodhya is shattered by the scheming of *Queen Kaikeyi's evil-minded and hunch-backed maid, Manthera, who convinces her mistress that her son, Prince Bharata should be king.*

**M** Dasharatha had once granted Kaikeyi two boons (wishes) for helping him in battle. Now at Manthera's insistence, she asks that her wishes be granted - not only the kingdom for Bharata, but a 14-year exile for Rama.

The old king is very upset at this request, but as a Kshatriya he cannot go back on his word, though it means renouncing his son and heir. And, as a dutiful son (and a Kshatriua himself), *Rama readily agrees to his stepmother's wishes and agrees to uphold his dharma* **N** in spite of Lakshmana's advice to "assert yourself."

Both Sita and Lakshmana insist on going with Rama, *so the three of them put on simple clothing of bark* **O** and depart for the forest to begin the 14-year exile. But even as *the exiles cross the sacred River Ganga,* **P** back in Ayodhya, *King Dasharatha dies of a broken heart,* **Q** thus leaving the kingdom to Bharata and fulfilling Kaikeyi's wish and the plotting of Manthera.

Bharata is also a Kshatriya. He will not defy his own dharma to take the throne that is rightfully his elder brother's. He visits the exiles in their hermitage to beg Rama to return and claim the throne. When Rama refuses, *Bharata takes his brother's sandals back to the throne in Ayodhya and vows to rule in Rama's name until the period of exile ends.* **R**

For a time, *the three exiled people live quietly and happily in their simple* ***ashram*** *at* ***Panchavati*** *among the wild animals* **S** and holy men. Their peace is interrupted by the **rakshasi** (demoness) **Surpanakha**, sister of the demon-king Ravanna. *Assuming the form of a wanton woman, she makes an indecent proposal to Rama, insulting and threatening Sita in the process.* **T** For this, Lakshmana cuts off her ears and nose. When Ravanna hears what has happened to his sister, he vows revenge.

Accompanied by his brother Maricha, Ravanna travels to Panchavati. *Maricha appears near the ashram as a beautiful golden deer and Sita asks Rama to capture it for her to keep as a pet.* **U** While Rama and Lakshmana are lured away by the phony deer, *Ravanna, disguised as a holy* *man tempts Sita from the protection of the ashram.* **V** Assuming his true form, *he kidnaps her and carries her off to his kingdom of Lanka.* **W**

*Realizing that they have been tricked and upset at finding Sita gone when they return the brothers search in vain for clues of her disappearance.* **X** Their journey eventually takes them deeper into the forests to the south. There, they hear first from the vulture, Jatayu, who had been mortally wounded in *his attempt to rescue Sita from Ravanna.* **Y** Further on, *Rama and Lakshmana strike a pact with the monkey king,* ***Sugriva****, and his general, Hanuman.* **Z** They hear of how *the monkeys found Sita's jewelry which she had dropped as a clue* **aa** to her whereabouts. In return for his aid, *Rama helps Sugriva regain the throne taken from him by his evil brother Bali, shooting the vandal in the back.* **bb**

*Recruiting their allies the bears,* **cc** , the monkey army, along with Rama and Lakshmana, sets off for Lanka. Reaching the southern ocean, they realize that only *Hanuman (who is actually the son of the wind god) has the ability to leap over to Lanka* **dd** to scout the situation. *He finds Sita imprisoned in the* ***Ashoka Grove*** *of Ravanna's palace. So that she will continue to resist Ravanna's demands that she become his wife, he gives her Rama's ring as a sign that rescue is on the way.* **ee**

Ravanna's demon soldiers discover Hanuman and drag him to the king. As the punishment for spying, his tail will be set afire. Hanuman is too clever for them. *He breaks his bonds and, with his tail on fire, sets the entire city on fire.* **ff** Returning to his companions, *Hanuman directs the building of a causeway from the subcontinent to Lanka,* **gg** enabling *the armies to cross as Ravanna watches from his fortress.* **hh**

The battle was soon underway and consists of many intrigues as well as much fighting. The allies, *especially Rama, kill many demons.* **ii** and are joined by *Ravanna's turncoat brother*

*Vibishana, who is brought to Rama by Hanuman and swears his allegiance.* **jj** Meanwhile, *Ravana, still attempting to convince Sita to be his wife, brings up the vision of Rama's severed head as proof that she will never be rescued.* **kk**

*Rama and Lakshmana are ambushed by the serpent arrows of Ravanna's invisible brother Indrajit,* **ll** but *are healed by the eagle Garuda,* **mm** before finally defeating him. *Hanuman flies north to the Himalayas and brings back a mountain of healing plants for all the wounded.* **nn**

*The final confrontation between Rama and Ravanna takes place on a battlefield littered with shattered bodies and broken weapons.* **oo** The evil king is finally vanquished by Rama's hail of arrows, thus getting around the blessing granted by Brahma that he could be killed by neither god nor superhuman - Rama was a mere human, though the god Vishnu who had taken that form.

*Rama then puts aside his weapons as Ravanna's wife weeps over the dead body.* **pp** Sita is brought back to her husband, but to her surprise, *he is suspicious of her behavior during captivity* **qq** - surely no woman could have resisted the power of Ravanna; she could not possibly have remained faithful. *Sita claims she is pure and is supported by Agni, the God of Fire and a host of heavenly figures.* **rr**

Rescue and reconciliation are followed by the *heroic couples' return to Ayodhya in the cloud-borne Pushpaka chariot,* **ss** and a joyous welcome from Bharata and all the people of the kingdom. *Their lavish coronation ushers in the glorious and peaceful reign of* **Rama Rajya,** **tt** an age of happiness and prosperity for all.

But there is trouble in paradise, in the form of *rumors which come to Rama's as he sits on his throne,* **uu** rumors continuing to question Sita's faithfulness while in the clutches of Ravanna. Unable to face even this tiny insult to his role and duty as king and Kshatriya and making the supreme sacrifice of giving up his beloved, Rama bids *Lakshmana take Sita once more into exile across the river in the far-away forest,* **vv** in order to remove even the slightest hint of dishonor from his reign.

Some years later, *a pair of twins, singers of great adventure stories, came to Rama's court to entertain.* **ww** Their story is of a handsome prince, sent into exile with his brother and his wife, who is treacherously kidnaped by a demon king. They sing of the quest to find the stolen princess, of the monkey and bear armies and the great battle to kill the demon. Recognizing first his own story, and then his own twin sons, Kush and Lava, born unbeknownst to him during Sita's exile, Rama asks Sita to return.

*She does so, accompanied by the poet and sage Valmiki,* **xx** teacher of the two boys, but refuses a second reconciliation - the hurt of his rejection and her exile has been too profound. Instead, *she calls upon her real Mother, the Earth, rising up out of the ground, to take her back.* **yy**

Chastened by this display of faithfulness and sacrifice greater even than his own perhaps misguided virtue, Rama rules fairly and wisely until the time comes for him to assume his true form. Having rid the earth of the evil of Ravanna and restored balance to the world's existence, *he ascends to heaven with all the other helpful divine beings by way of the* ***River Sarayu,*** *becoming Vishnu one more,* **zz** ever ready to return in time of human need.

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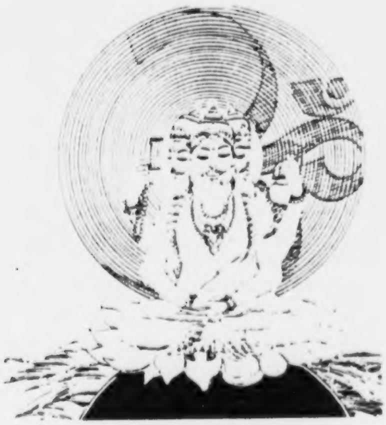
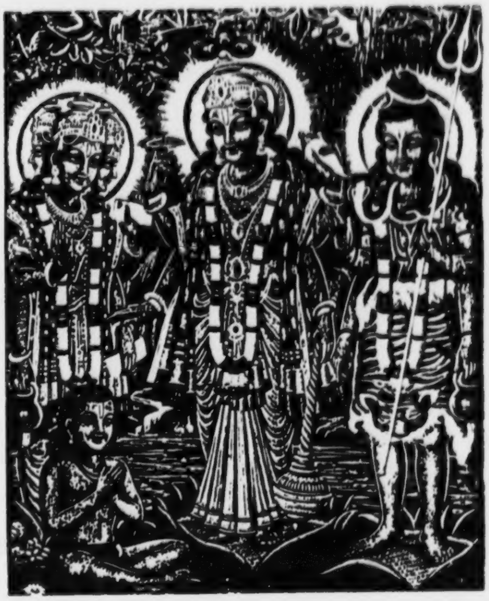
## Worksheet 4: The Story of Rama in Pictures

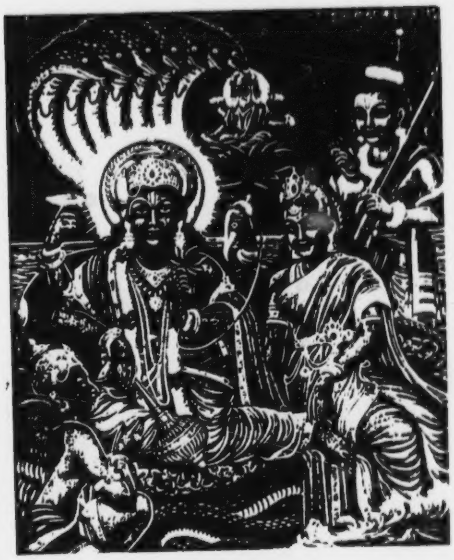
**Brahma**



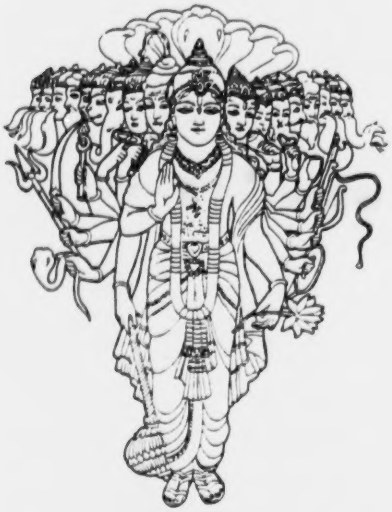
**Trinity**



**Vishnu**



**Vishvarup**



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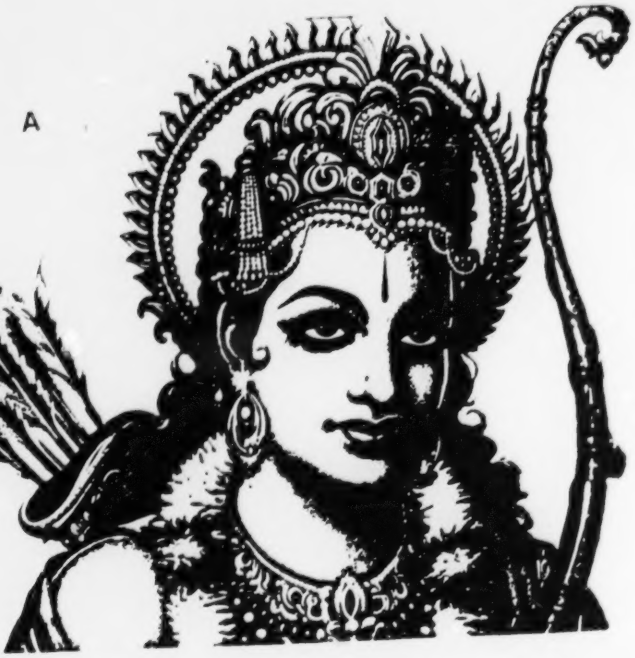

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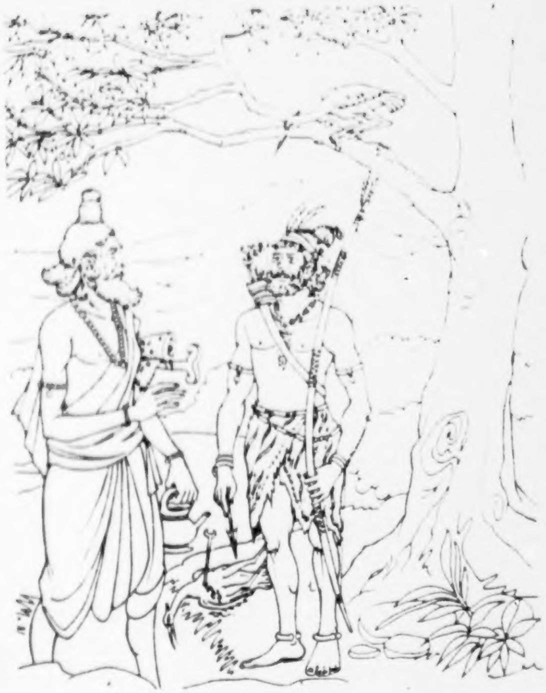

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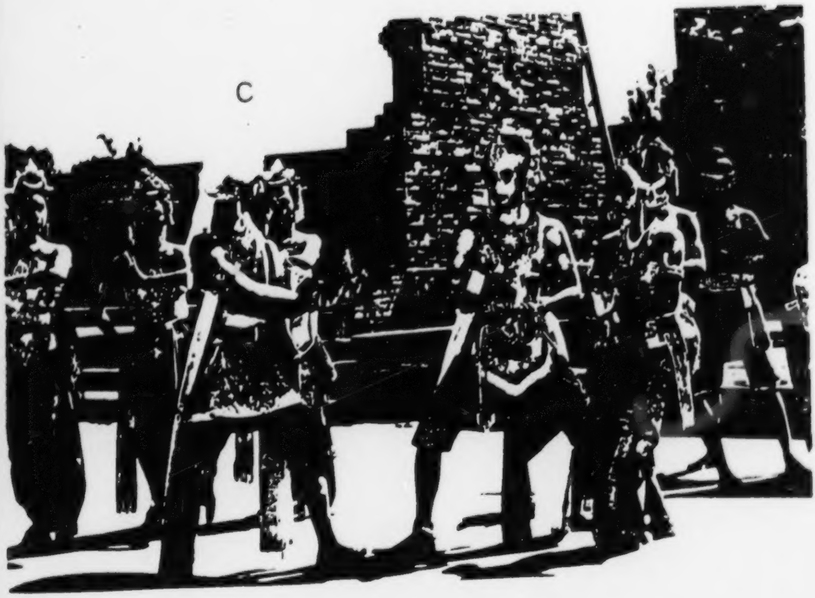

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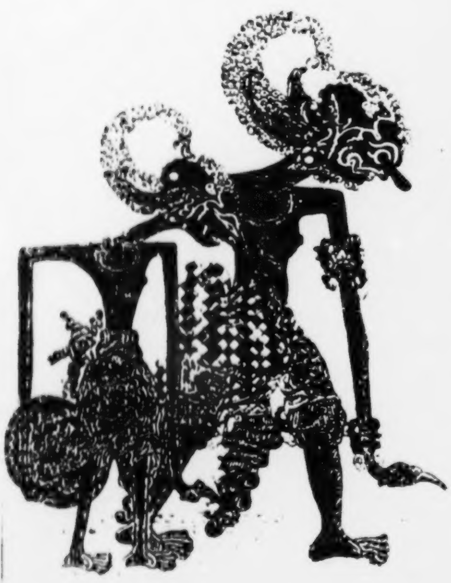

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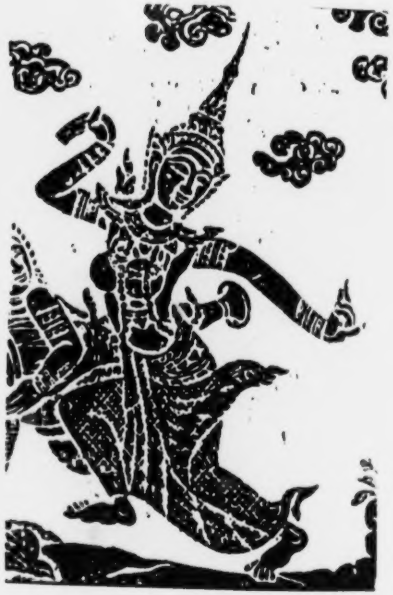

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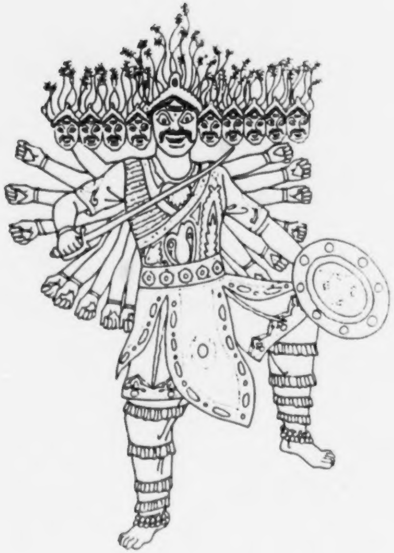

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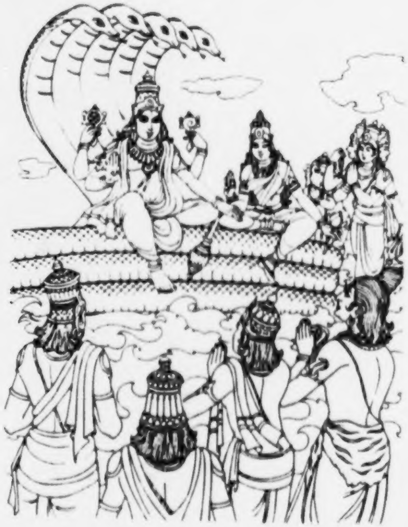

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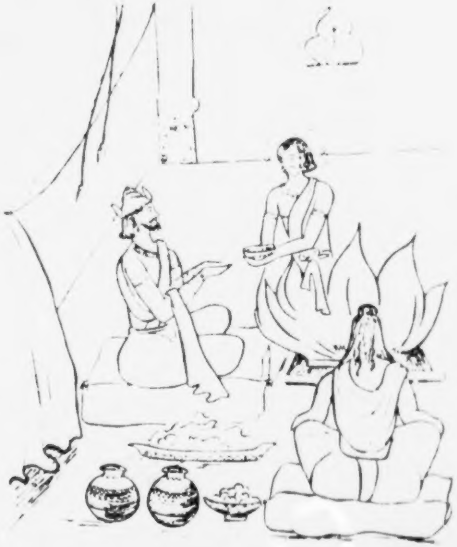

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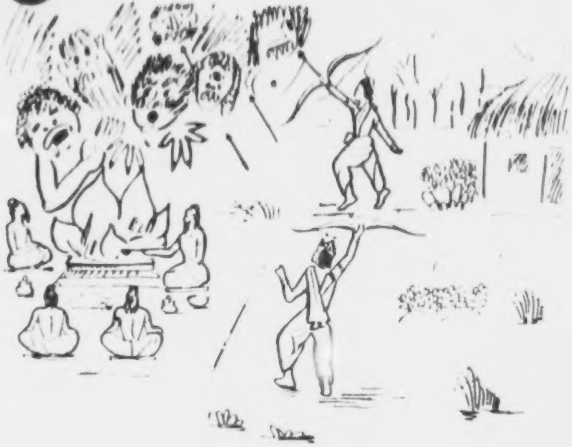

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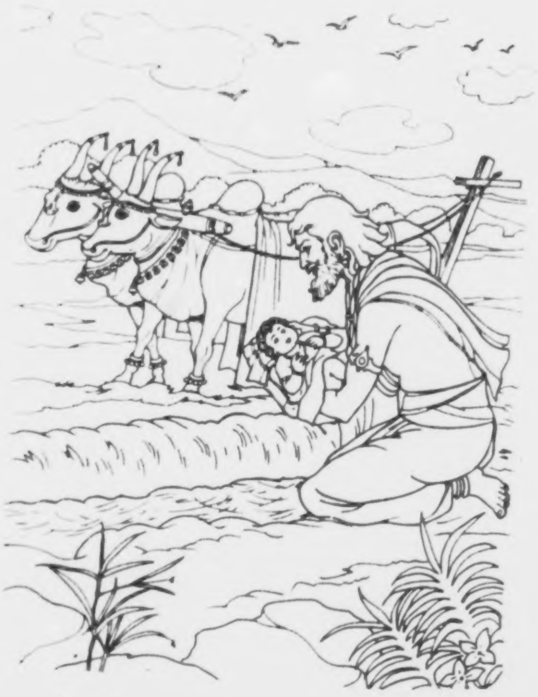

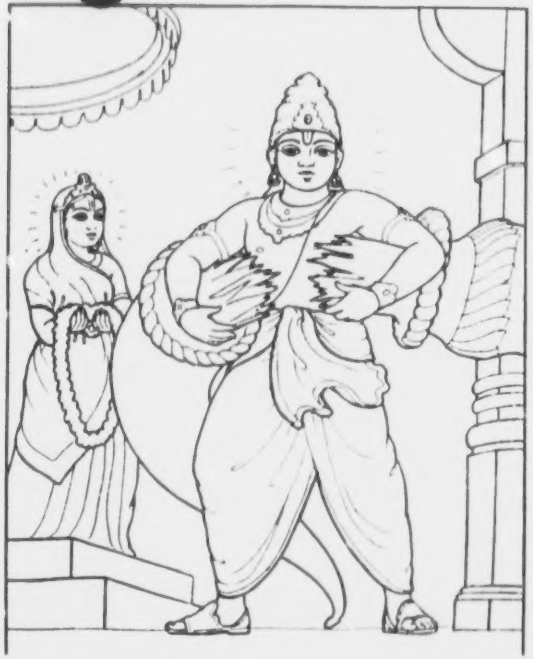

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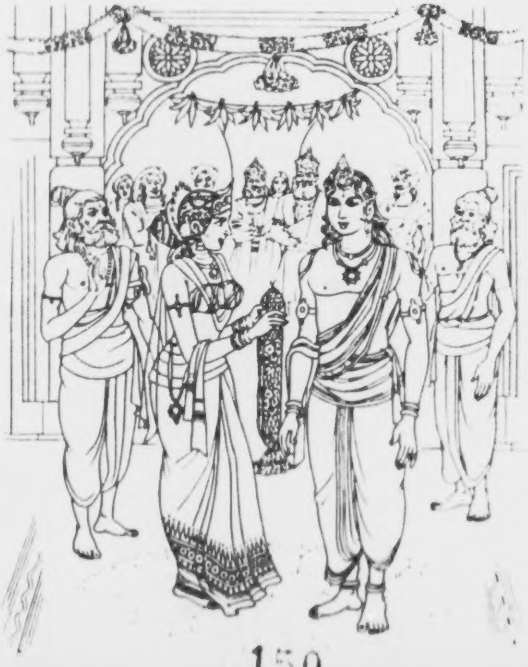

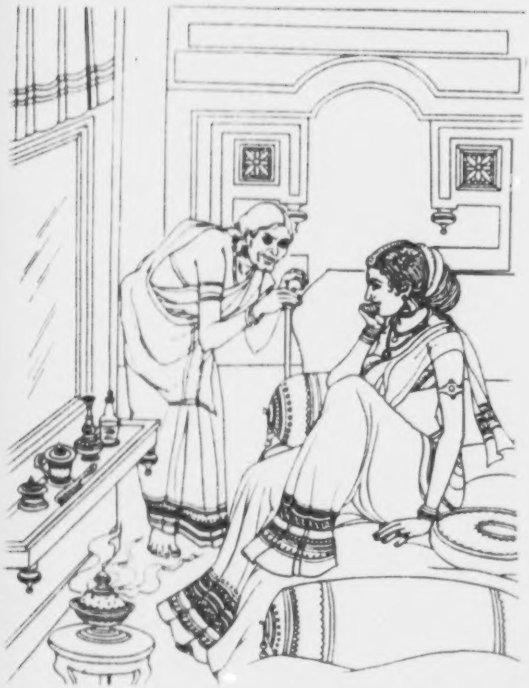

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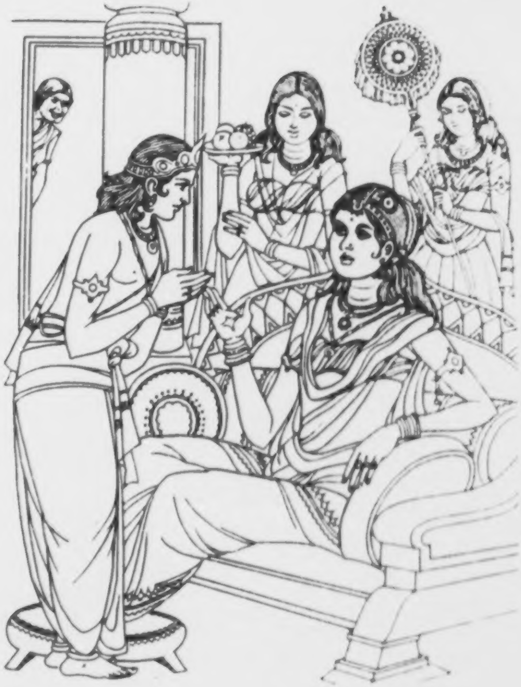

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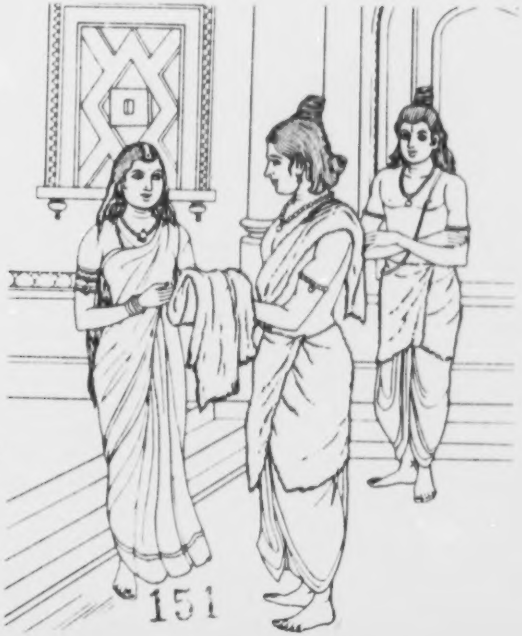

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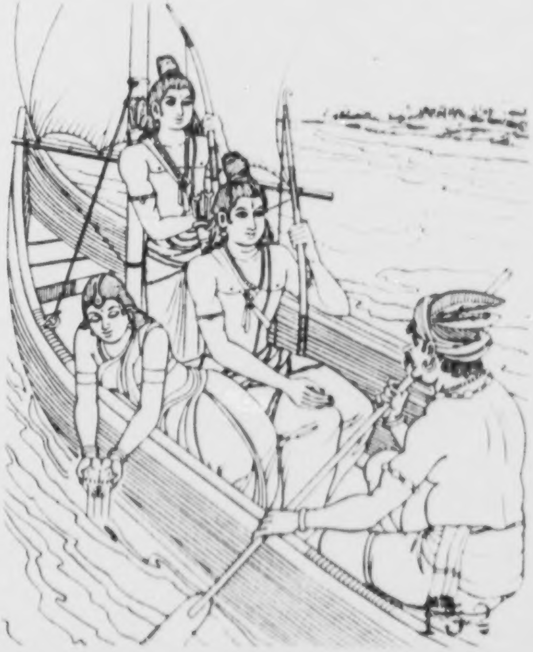

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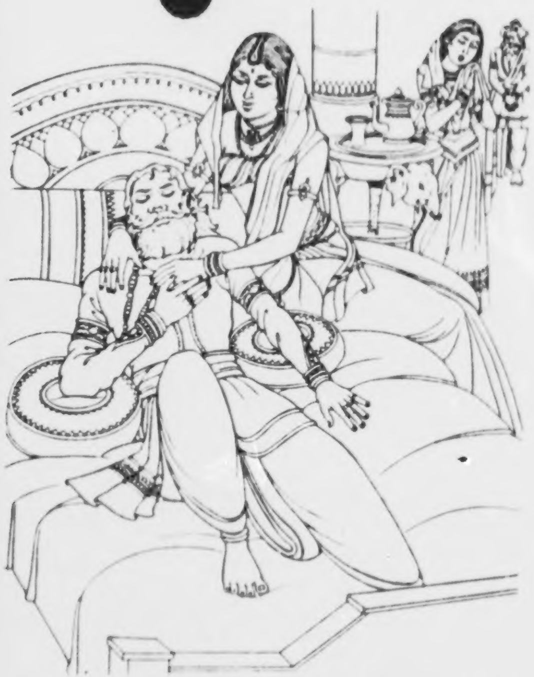

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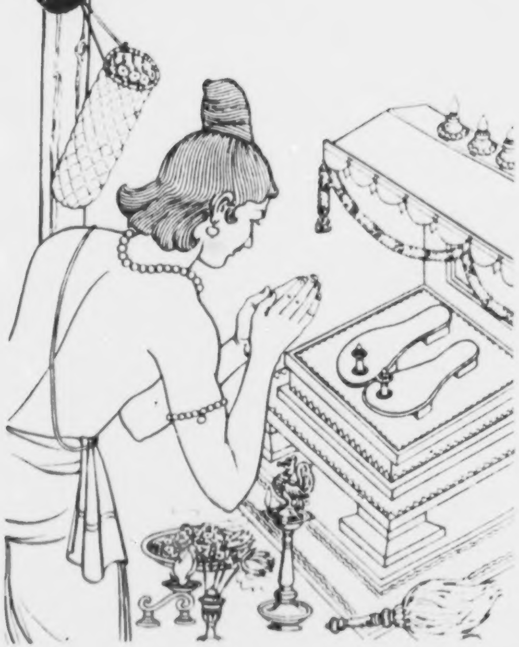

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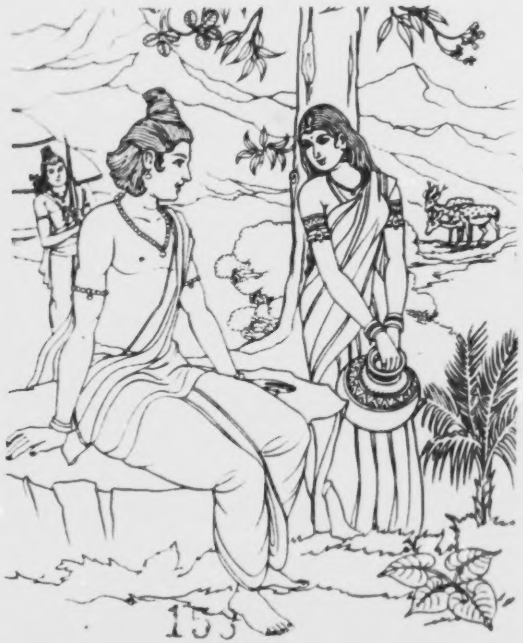

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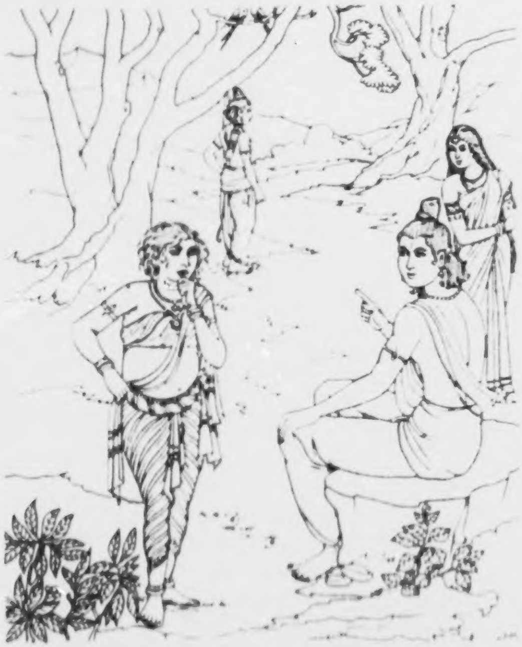

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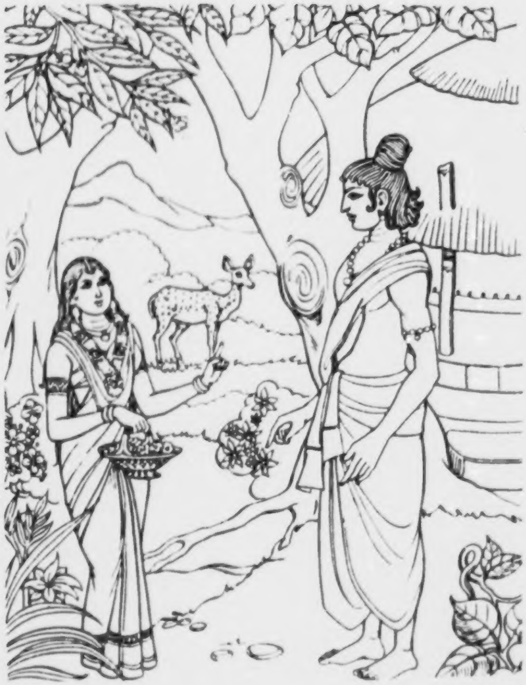

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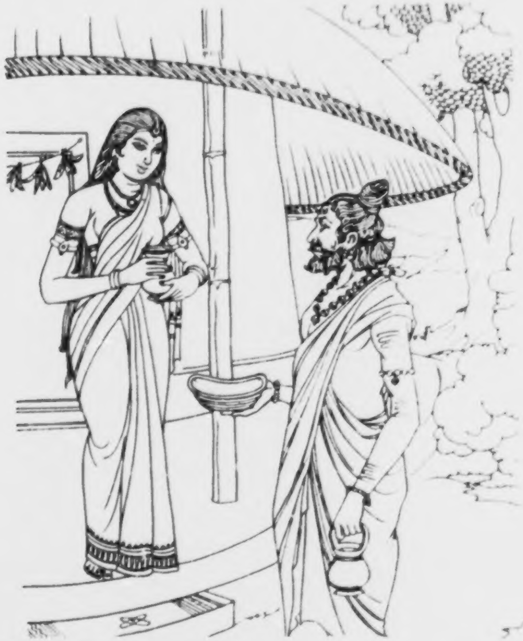

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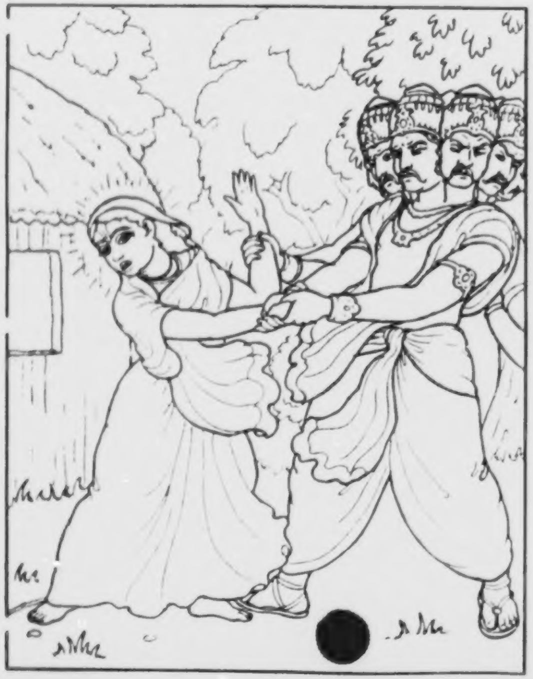

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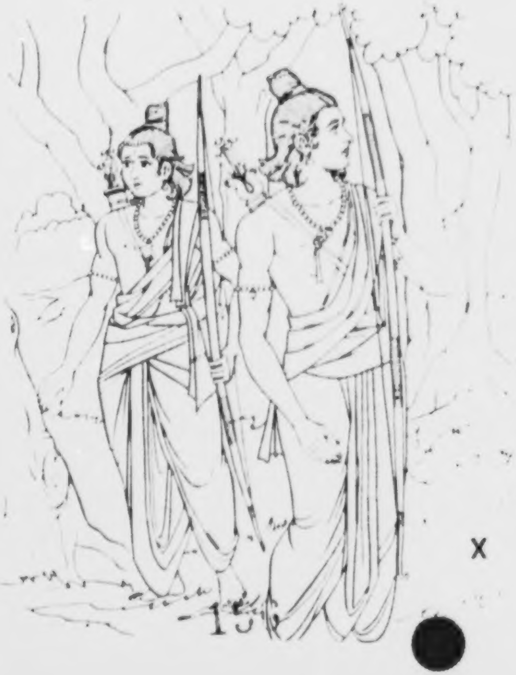

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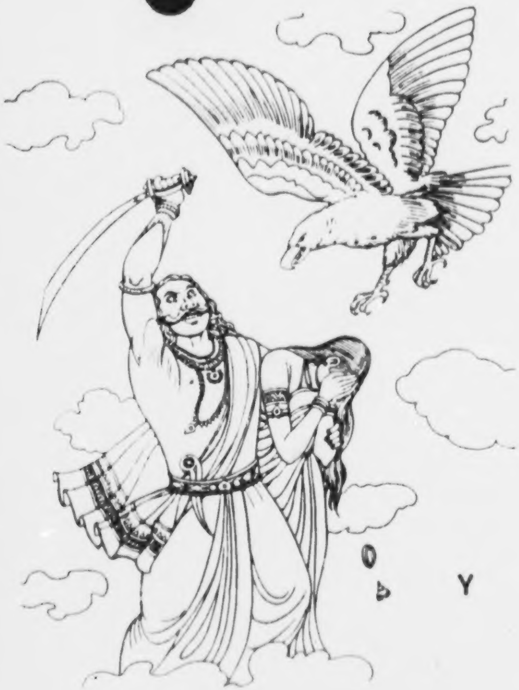

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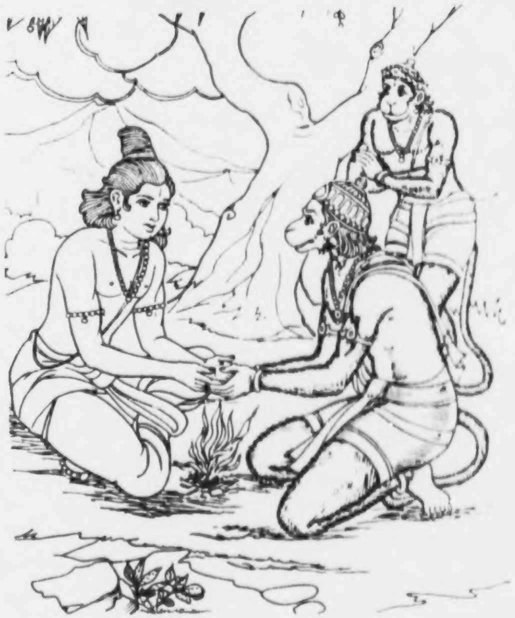

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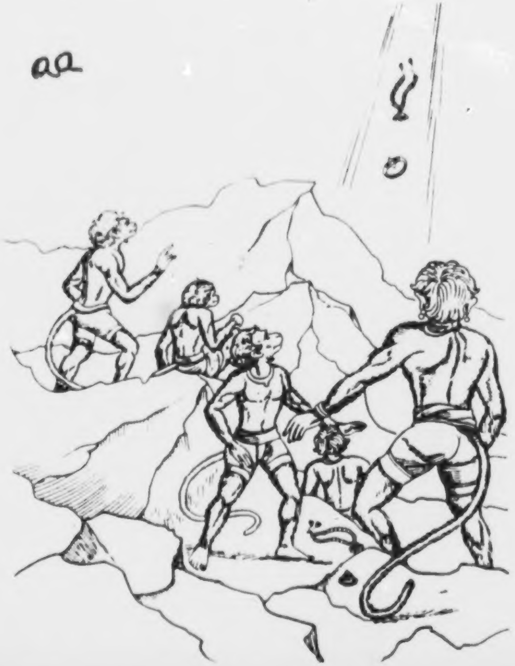

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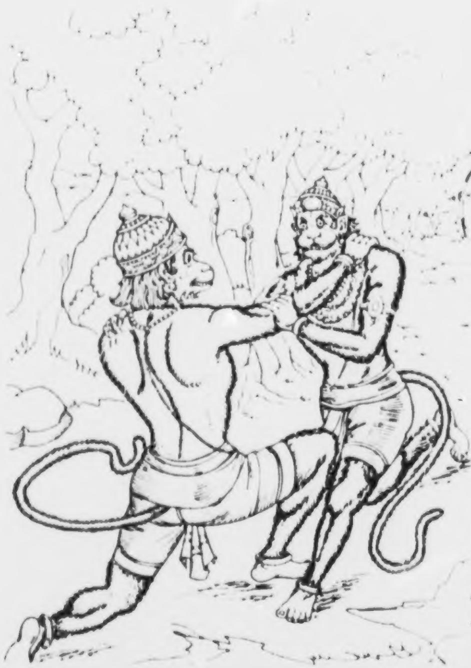

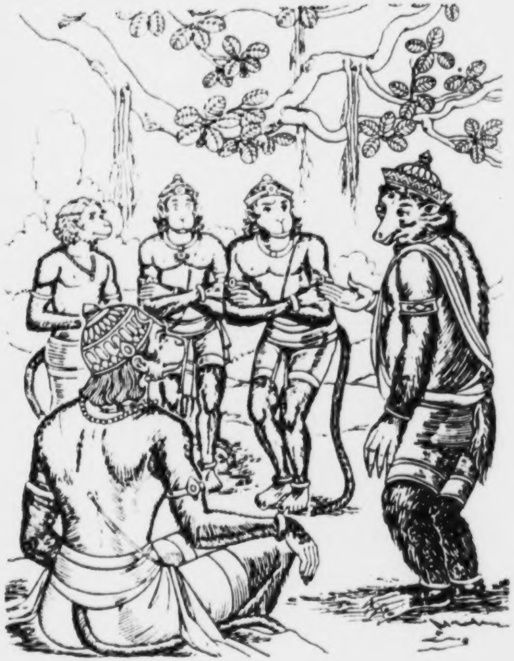

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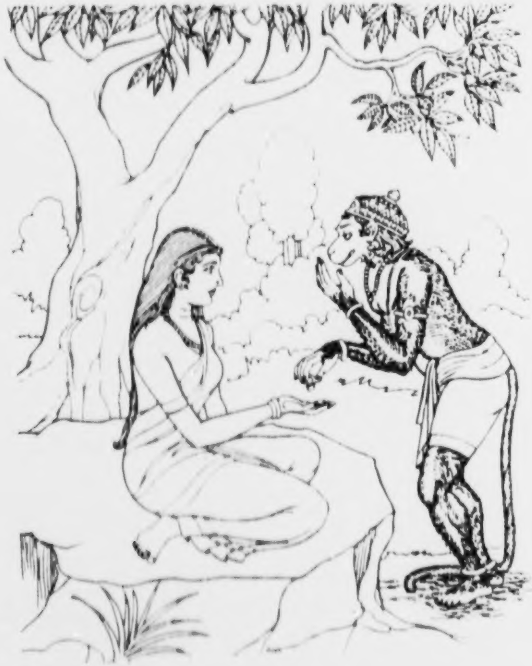

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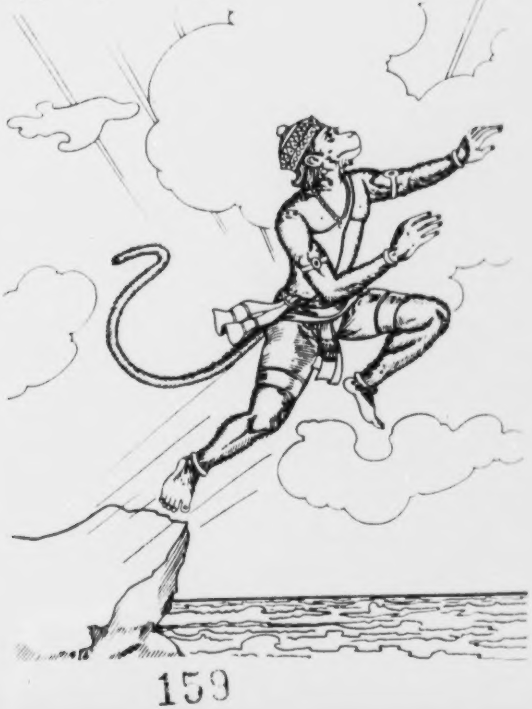

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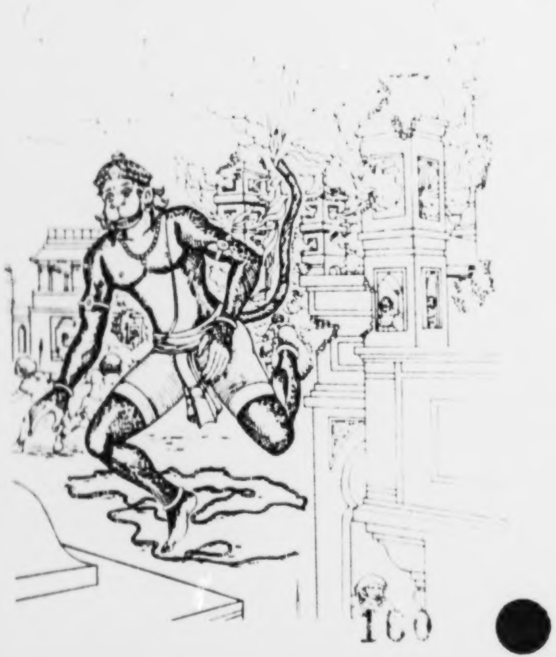

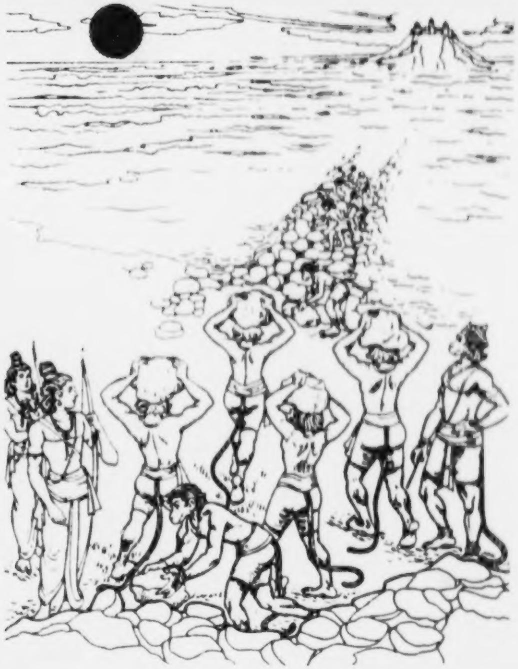

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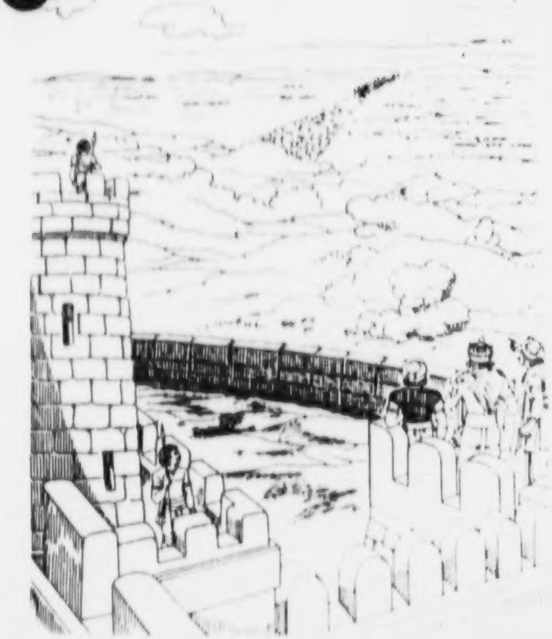

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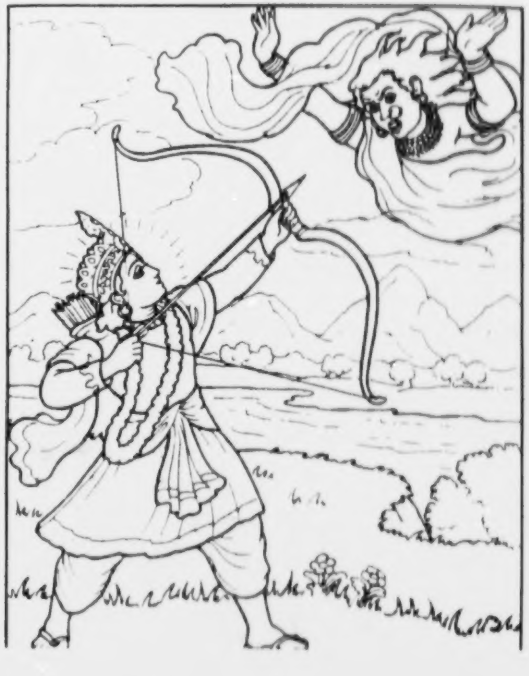

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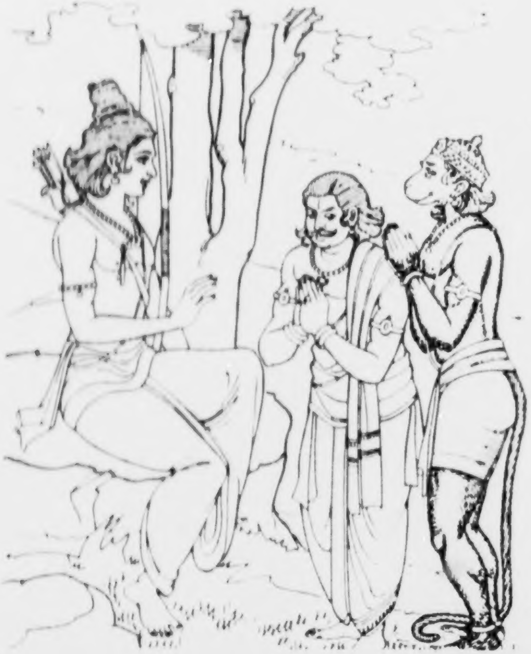

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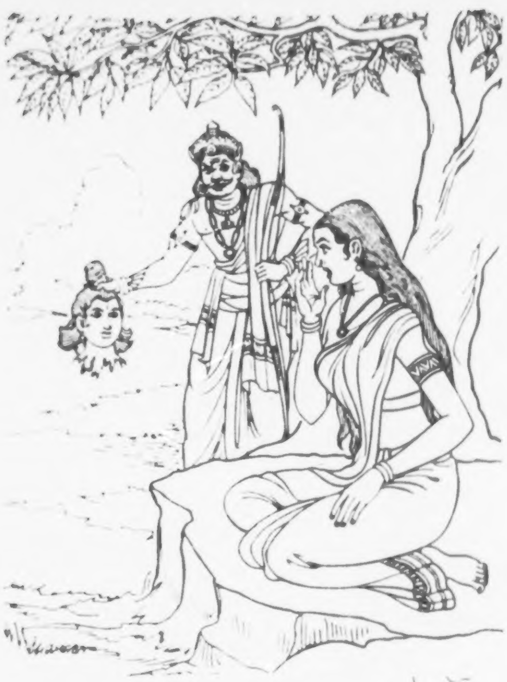

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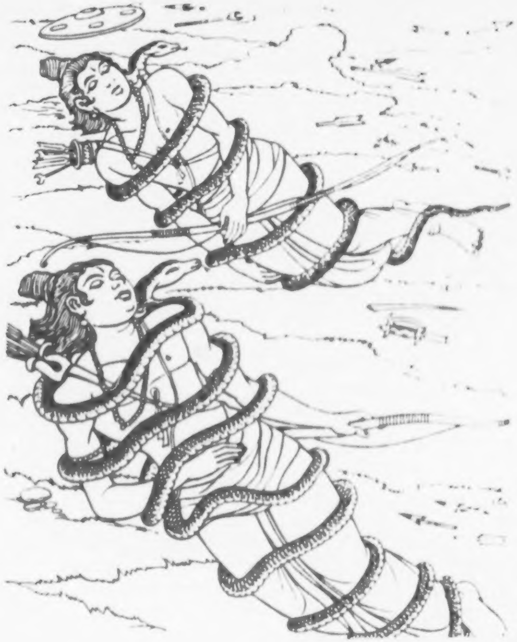

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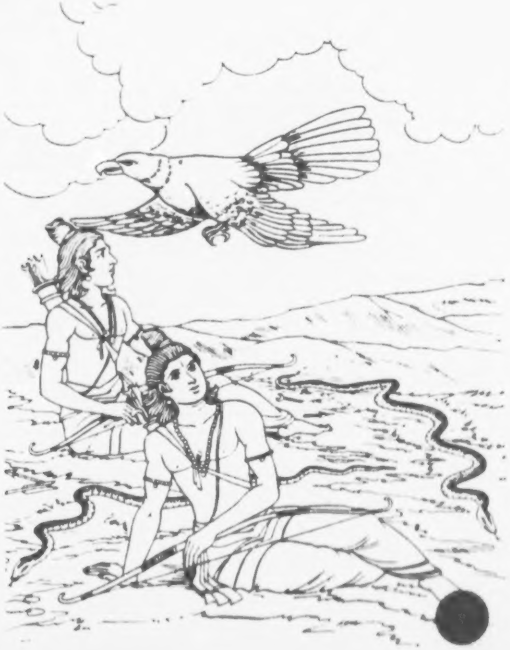

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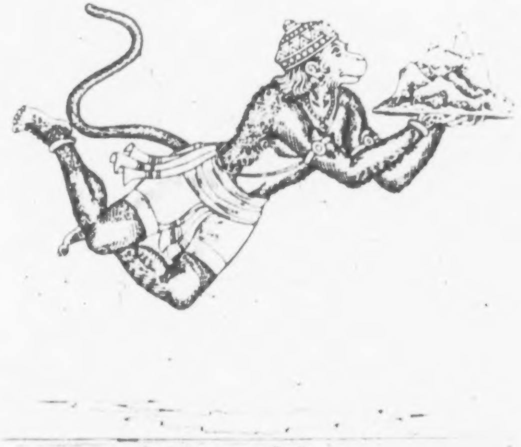

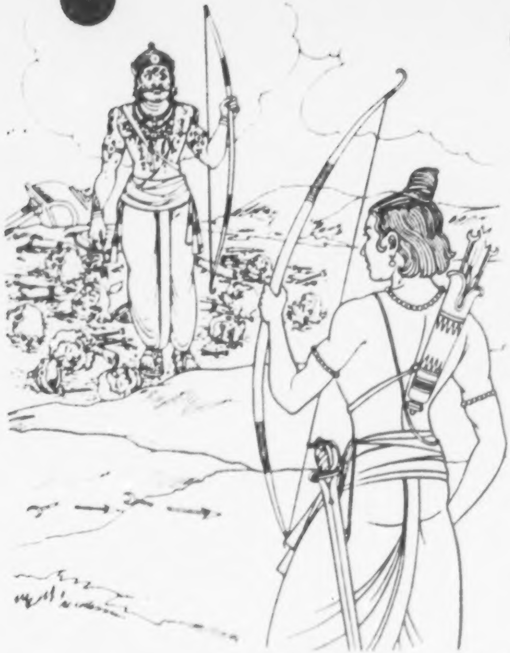

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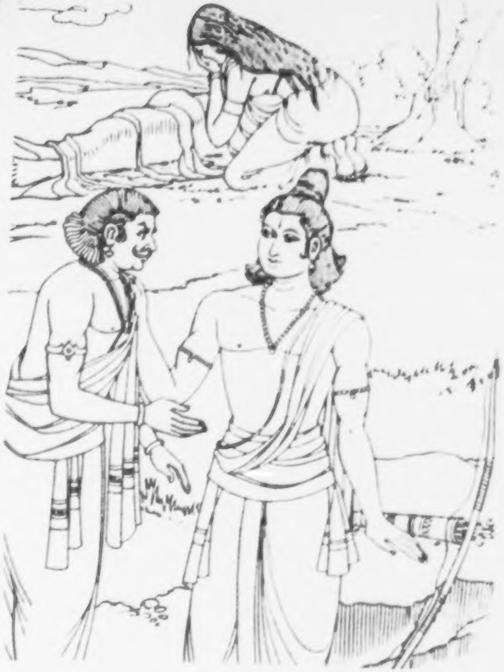

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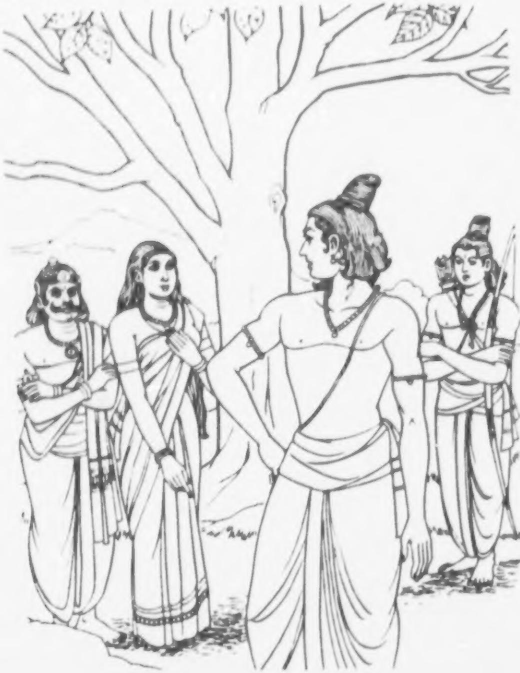

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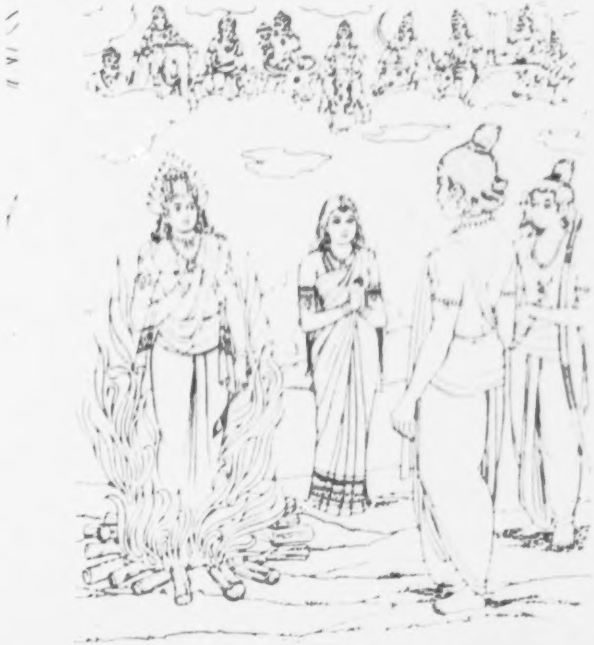

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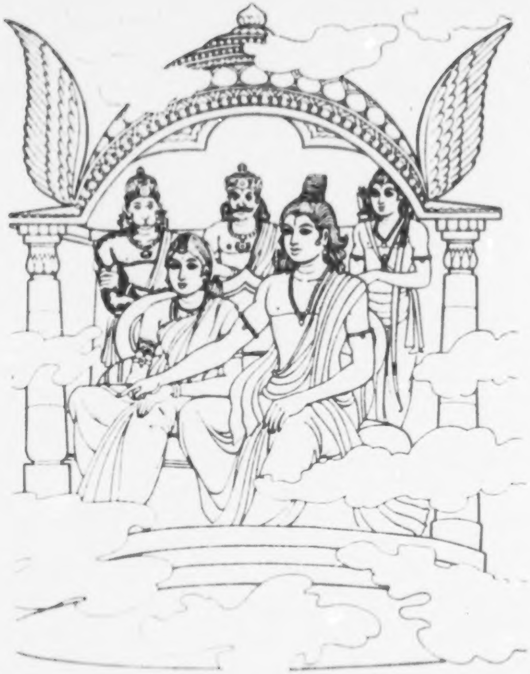

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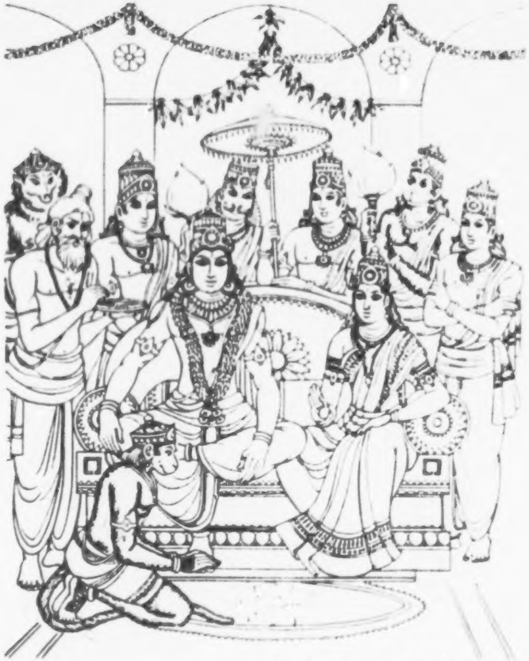

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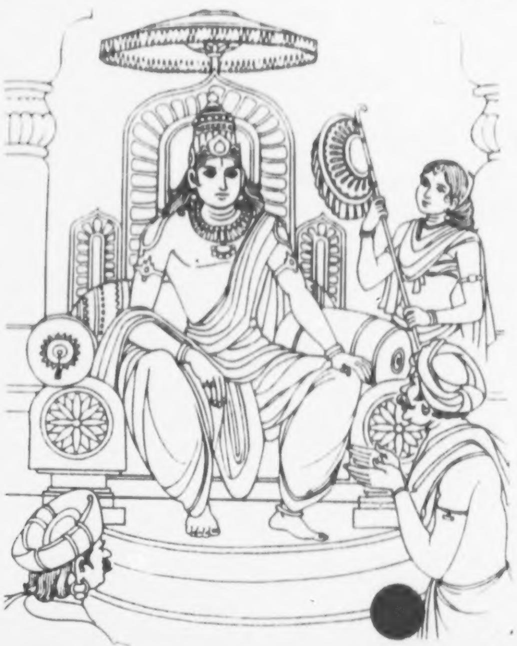

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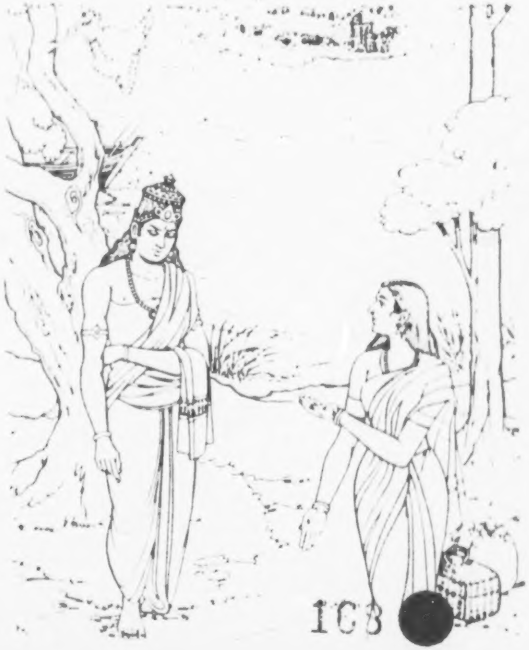

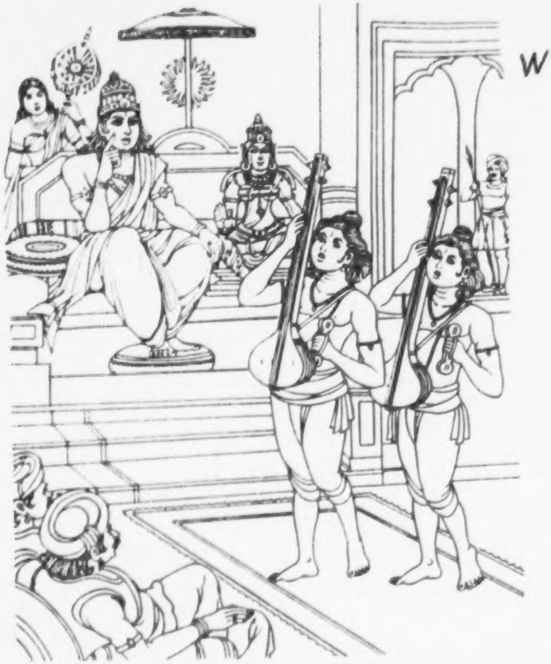

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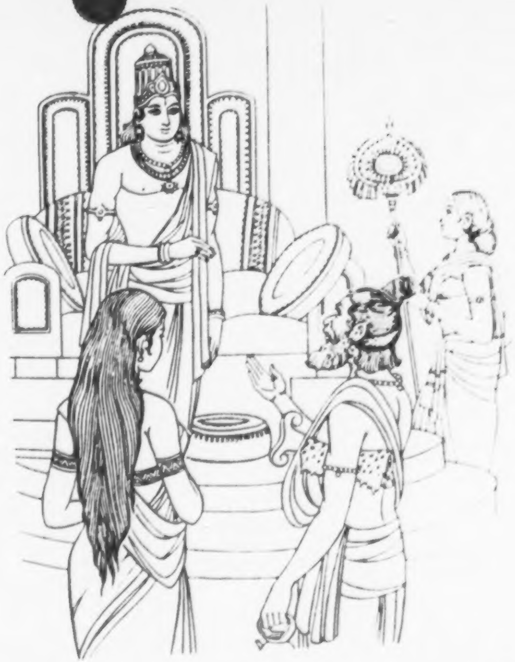

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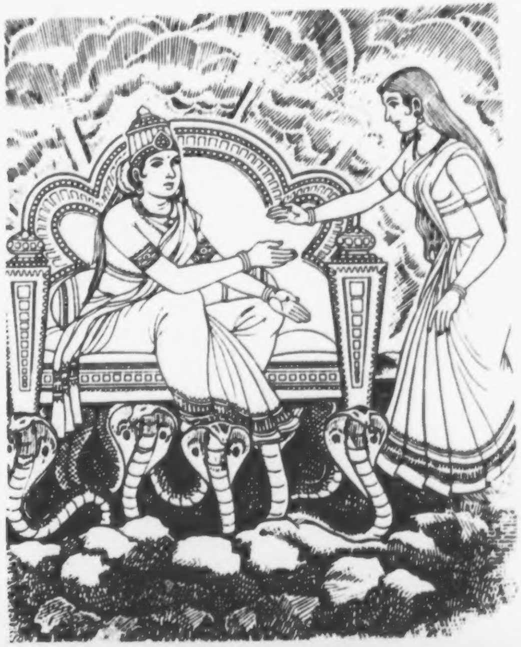

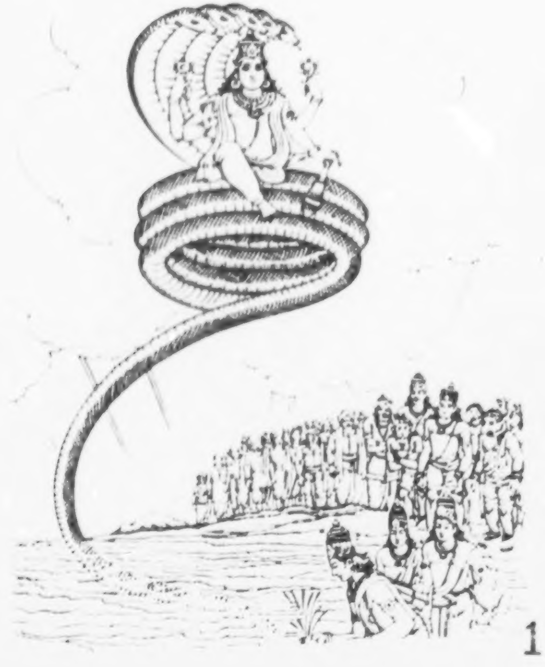

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## UNIT 8, LESSON 2

### Focus Question: How Does the Ramayana Provide Role Models and Expectations for Behavior for Hindus?

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- examine the role Ramayana plays in perpetuating Hindu values.
- discriminate among the various portrayals of characters in the text.
- evaluate *Ramayana* as a vehicle for artistic and communication skills.

### Teacher Background

*(Text below reprinted by permission, Upreti, Mohan, Bharatiya Kala Kendra Theatre Company, Ram Lila (program). New Delhi, 9/93-10/93)*

> *"Ramayana makes us understand somewhat the secret of the old Indians in holding together a variegated society divided up in many ways and graded in castes, in harmonizing their discords and giving them a common background of heroic tradition and ethical living. Deliberately they tried to build up a unity of outlook among the people which was to survive and overshadow all diversity."*
>
> \- Shri Jawaharlal Nehru

*Symbolism in India serves a very important role in people's lives. Hinduism is filled with symbolism, accounting for its wonderful stories and artwork. Through a study of the symbolism present in South Asian culture, a person can gain a greater appreciation for Hinduism and the culture of South Asia.* ***Ramayana*** *plays an important role in illustrating the impact of the symbols and the values they reenforce. A study of the text shows the values and standards of behavior expected of Hindus when they turn to the gods and deities as role models.*

### Springboard

▸ Show students a comic of a "superhero." Have them respond to the following questions in their notebooks and then share their responses.

- Are these characters well known throughout the United States? Internationally?
- What values do they represent?
- Are these "American values?" International values?
- Do others people try to copy these values and behaviors? Why?

### Procedure

We have looked at the story of *Ramayana* as well as the characters. Select one of the characters (e.g. Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Ravanna, Lakshmana.)

- Using the graphics, what specifics about the drawing help you realize the character of the person? How is that done?
- Is this done in depicting contemporary superheros or villains?
- How does this reinforce stereotypes?

We know that words can conjure up an image and give us an impression of a person.

- How can a image set a model for us? (e.g. - the "image" of being beautiful, thin, "cool", sharp etc.)
- Is an image always the best way for us to establish our ideals? Why? Why not?
- Some images are "larger then life." What doesthat mean? What examples can you give? (e.g Malcolm X, motherhood, etc.)
- In the study of *Ramayana*, how do the images move beyond art to symbols? Explain your answer.

### Summary/Evaluation

Valmiki created *Ramayana* from the narrative strain which had been told through India for many years. The characters of Rama, Sita, Ravanna, Lakshmana, Hanuman and others have become "larger then life" and play a role in the everyday life of South Asians.

▸ Select three or more contemporary characters (real, imaginary) and write a short narrative placing them in the position where they establish expectations for behavior. Share responses wih classmates and post narratives.

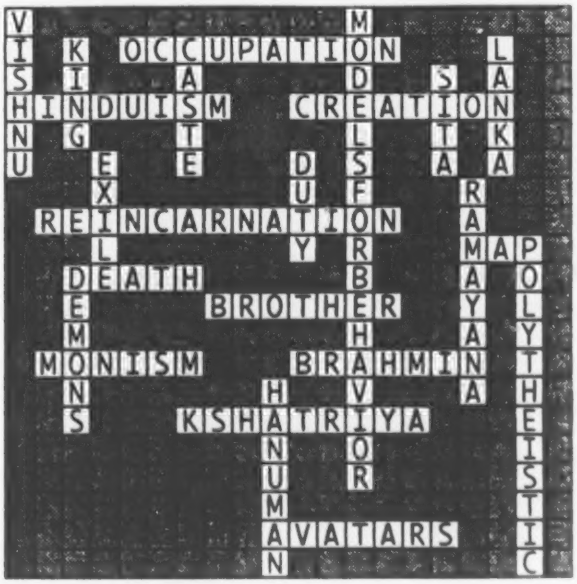
### Alternate strategy

Select any one (or more) of the characters. Rewrite a segment of the storywhere the expectations for the character change, changing the tone and result of the epic.

### Enrichment Activities

▸ Complete the **Crossword Puzzle Exercise: Hindu Ideas**.

Answers


VISHNU
KING
OCCUPATION
CASTE
MODELS OF BEHAVIOR
SITA
LANKA
HINDUISM
CREATION
EXIL
DUTY
REINCARNATION
RAMAYANA
MAP
POLYTHEISTIC
DEATH
DEMONS
BROTHER
MONISM
BRAHMIN
HANUMAN
KSHATRIYA
AVATARS

▸ Answer the following questions:

- What role does the concept of dharma play in *Ramayana*?
- Do you think this idea has a positive or negative effect on the lives of the characters?
- Would a Hindu agree with your assessment?

▹ Several moral issues arise during the narrative. What are your thoughts on:

- Selecting Sita's husband by a trial of strength.
- Rama's act of shooting Bali in the back while he fights with Sugriva.
- Vibishana's defection from Ravana and his alliance with Rama.
- Rama's questioning of Sita's faithfulness to him after her rescue.
- The exile of Sita because of gossip about her captivity in Lanka.

▹ Consider the role of women in *Ramayana*.

- What possibilities and problems do you see in the way they are portrayed and treated?

▹ Some historians feel that much of the so-called "mythology" may have rootsin actual historical events. Remembering what you know about the early history of India, speculate about the kinds of events that might lie at the core of *Ramayana*.

▹ There are many versions of *Ramayana* told in many different ways allover India. Some versions make Ravana a much more sympathetic and positive figure.

- Where would you expect there versions to originate? Why? Explain.

## How Does the Ramayana Provide Role Models and Expectations for Behavior for Hindus?

### Crossword Puzzle Exercise: Hindu Ideas

### Questions

Across
4. Social position depends on religious "purity" & ________________
8. The belief system of most Indians is ____________________
9. Brahma is the Lord of __________________
13. The Hindu idea of time as cyclical is illustrated by belief in __________________
14. Following Rama's travels on a ________________ would teach India's geography
16. Kali is the Hindu goddess of __________________
17. Laksmana is Rama's closest companion and ________________
18. "God is One, the Wise Know It By Many Names" - the concept of _____________
19. The most respected group in Hindu society is the ____________________
21. Kings, and warriors are traditionally members of the ___________________ group
22. Rama and Krishna are __________________ of the great Lord Vishnu

Down
1. Deity whose task is to preserve balance of good & evil, Lord ________________
2. The Gods serve as ___________________ for human beings
3. ________________ Dasharatha was the father of Rama and his brothers
5. India's system of social organization is commonly called __________________
6. Ravana was ruler of the kingdom of ___________________
7. ________________, heroine of the Ramayana, was the daughter of Mother Earth
10. Instead of becoming ruler of Ayodhya, Rama was forced into __________________
11. Though it angered almost everyone, Rama's ________________ was to obey his father
12. The ____________________ or tale of Rama's adventures is known by all Hindus
15. Hinduism has many gods - thus it can be seen as _______________________
16. _____________________ represent evil or forces opposed to dominant Hindu groups
20. Perhaps Hinduism's most beloved deity, messenger, loyal sidekick: __________________

Word List
Avatars
Brahmin
brother
caste
creation
death
demons
duty
exile
Hanuman
Hinduism
king
Kshatriya
Lanka
map
models for behavior
monism
occupation
polytheistic
Ramayana
reincarnation
Sita
Vishnu

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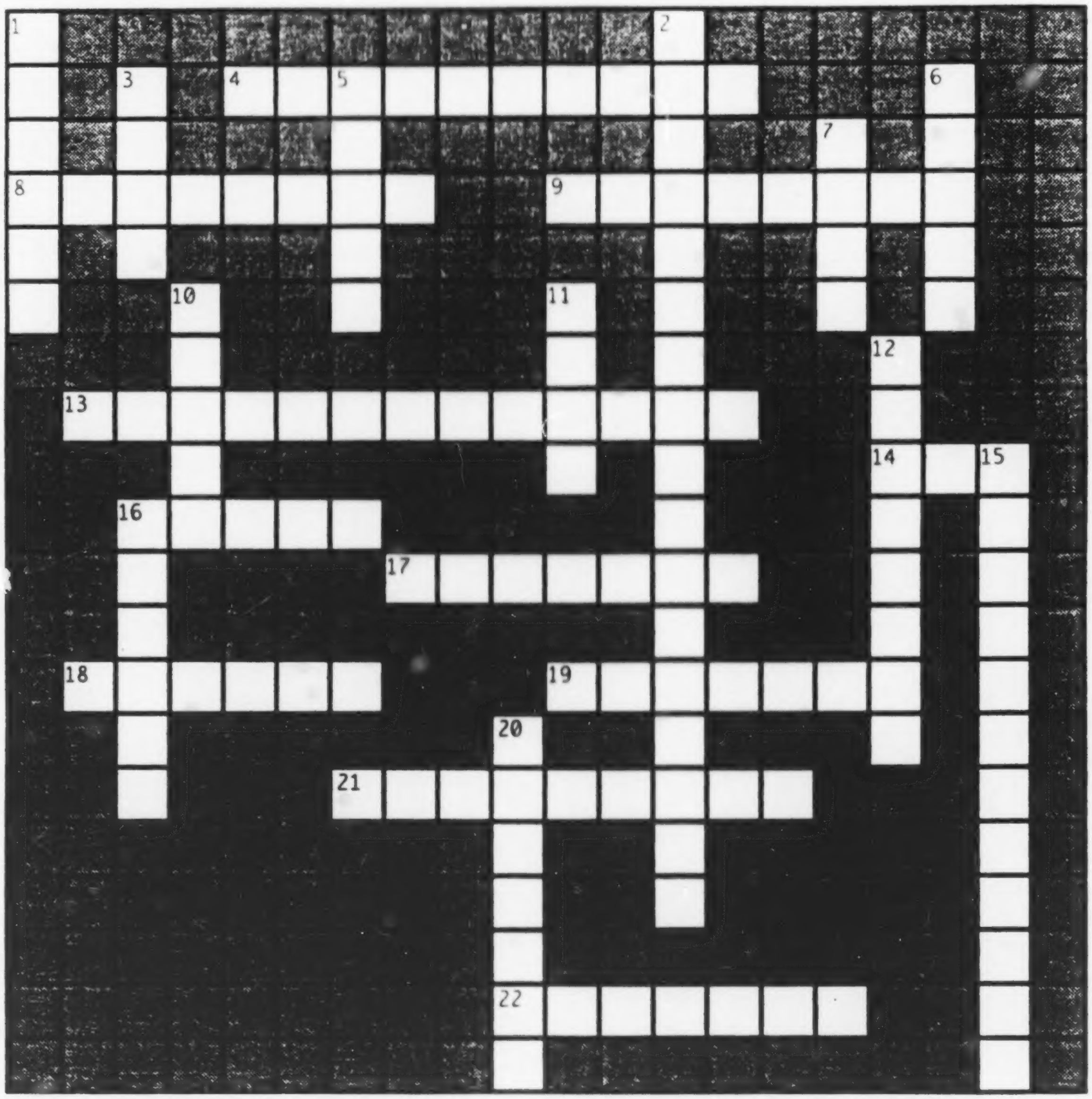
## HINDU IDEAS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## UNIT 9, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: Why is Hanuman a Monkey God to many People in India ?

### Major Ideas

- In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman acts as the perfect servant, friend and emissary for Rama. He has been deified by the Indian people and we often see statutes of Hanuman worshiped throughout India.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- identify the special characteristics of Hanuman found in the *Ramayana.*
- analyze how Hanuman's qualities have made him a significant god for the people of India.
- assess why Hanuman is an important cultural icon both in the *Ramayana* and the lives of the people of India.

### Teacher Background

*In the story of the Ramayana, Hanuman a monkey god, plays important roles as a ambassador, loyal friend, servant, messenger and warrior. His unflinching reliability and success in all these roles have earned him a high degree of respect, admiration and love among readers of the text.*

*Hanuman is the son of Pavana, the wind god, and Anjana, once goddess but cursed into a monkey. Pavana blessed Hanuman with his strength, speed and ability to fly. Hanuman grows up incredibly strong but is typically mischievous. One day, he saw the sun and thinking it was an apple or a ball (accounts vary) began chasing it in the sky trying to catch it. The sun cried out to Indra (Vedic god of gods) for help. Indra dropped a thunderbolt on Hanuman who fell unconscious from the sky. Hanuman's father, the wind god got very mad and refused to blow. Soon all life forms began to struggle for breath, and there was no cool breeze to lessen the effect of the heat. Brahma (the creator), Indra and other gods went to Pavana to apologize. They revived Hanuman and Brahma gave him the gift of immortality. Indra gave him the ability to change his shape and size. Pavana however requested that they also give him wisdom and intelligence; thus Hanuman became the wisest of all monkeys.*

*In the Ramayana, as Hanuman grows, his strength grows with him. One day, with his bare hands he saved Prince Sugreeva from a charging wild elephant. He then becomes the chief minister and ambassador of ousted King Sugreeva of Kishkinda, (a monkey Kingdom.) Hanuman's real encounters start when Rama and Lakshmana enter Sugreeva's place of refuge in the forest. Rama, a mighty prince and warrior, seeks Sugreeva's help in finding his wife Sita who is abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. Upon spotting the two strangers, Sugreeva sends Hanuman to inquire who they are. At first, Hanuman disguises himself as a beggar but when he identifies Rama and Lakshmana, he returns to his original form. Both brothers are impressed with Hanuman's level of intelligence.*

*Rama and Sugreeva form an alliance to oust Sugreeva's brother. When Sugreeva becomes king, he then dispatches his monkey scouts in all directions to find Sita. Rama gives Hanuman his ring to give to Sita when he finds her. Hanuman then goes with the southern expedition, flies eight hundred miles across the sea to Lanka, finds Sita and comforts her with Rama's message and assures her that she will be rescued soon. Before leaving, Hanuman destroys the royal garden of Lanka and kills the demons who defend it. He is, however, captured by Ravana's son Indrajit and taken to Ravana where they light his tail afire in order to punish him and also amuse themselves. Hanuman then grows his tail, changes his size, frees himself and flies from building* *to building setting the city on fire with his tail. He then extinguishes his tail in the ocean and flies back to Kishkinda to report his findings.*

*Sita's location is then identified and an army is organized to build a bridge from the mainland to Lanka. During the war, Hanuman proves himself by fighting bravely and relentlessly. At times, he carries Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders. Lakshmana becomes fatally injured by Indrajit's poison arrows and can only be cured by certain herbs found on one of the peaks of the Himalayas. The herbs must be administered before daybreak in order to save his life. Hanuman immediately flies all the way to the Himalayas. Desperate at not being able to identify all the herbs, Hanuman tears off the entire mountain peak, places it on his shoulders, and flies back to Lanka.*

*Hanuman's prowess is undeniable. He is instrumental in finding Sita, in being an emissary, and in arranging Rama's return to Ayodhya. His loyalty is unquestionable. As a result of his importance in* ***the Ramayana****, he is worshiped throughout India. He is particularly important to wrestlers and those who aspire physical prowess. Many temples and shrines are dedicated to him, while many songs and chants list his virtues and devotion to Rama.*

## Springboard

There are iconic animals in Christianity, e.g. Mary's donkey, the sheep in the manger, etc.

- How do these animals get displayed in a ritual setting?
- What role does the lamb play in the Christian religion?
- Do you know of any other religions where animals receive special attention? Explain.

## Procedure

▹ Distribute **Worksheet 1: The God with Many Faces**. Students are allowed sufficient time to read worksheet and complete exercise. Students will meet in **dyads** to compare their answers. Teacher will elicit responses from students and record answers in chalkboard.

- How many of you would like to know a monkey like Hanuman? Why?
- What do you think is Hanuman's most important characteristic? Explain.
- What qualities do you think he is lacking?

▹ Teacher will show segment of video *Spotlight on Ramayana* illustrating Hanuman.

- How do these pictures illustrate what we just read about Hanuman?
- Do you think he is worthy of being called a god? Explain your answer
- Which of Hanuman's deeds do you think is the greatest?

▹ It is important to understand how Hanuman is part of the everyday life of Indians. Distribute **Worksheet 2: Hanuman and the Magic Herbs**. Discuss the characteristics of Hanuman that make him a hero-god to Indian men.

## Summary/Application

✎ We could all use a Hanuman in our lives today. Teacher will ask students to write a brief story describing how Hanuman uses his special qualities to solve a school or neighborhood problem. Students will read stories aloud and share their responses.

## Why is Hanuman a Monkey God to many People in India ?

### Worksheet 1: The God with Many Faces

> **Victory to Hanuman! Ocean of Knowledge and Virtue, Light-giver of the Three Worlds, Victory to the King Among the Monkeys. The Messenger of Rama, Star of Valour, Son of Anjani, the Son of the Wind God!**

This is how Tulsidas, the great Indian poet begins his forty verses about the monkey god, Hanuman. Hanuman is not one of the original Vedic gods of India. Instead, his worship is connected with the *bhakti* movement, a movement of love and devotion to the many gods of the Indian subcontinent. In the *Ramayana*, Rama, a living incarnation (life) of the great Hindu god Vishnu, is served by Hanuman, a king of the monkeys. In fact, Hanuman is the greatest servant of all to Rama, totally devoted to the ideal king of the epic. Because Hanuman is so devoted to Ram, he also becomes an object of devotion. In many cases, Rama and Hanuman are viewed equally, not as separate and unequal gods. In fact, at one time the worship of Hanuman became so popular that the number of temples devoted to him was greater than the number of temples devoted to Rama.

In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman is described as having a golden complexion, good looks and warrior-like behavior. There are three important places in the epic where Hanuman plays an important role - the first meeting with Rama, the journey in search of Sita and finding her in the Asoka forest in Lanka, and bringing the herbs from the Himalaya Mountains to the wounded Lakshmana. All the stories about Rama and Hanuman contain these three episodes.

In the first case, when Hanuman meets Rama, he is described as having polite behavior. From the very beginning, Hanuman accepts Rama as his lord. In the second case, it is only Hanuman who has the courage to cross to the island of Lanka to find Sita for his lord. When he reaches Lanka, Hanuman "defeats demons and enters the fortress to find Sita." It is Hanuman who burns Lanka. When he returns to the mainland, Rama says, "I have no words to express my gratitude; you have done so much for me."

But Hanuman has one final deed to perform for Rama. On the battlefield, Hanuman is always around, watching over Rama. When Laksmana is severely wounded, it is Hanuman who leaps to the Himalayas and brings the life saving herb to Rama's brother.

Rama and Sita return to Ayodhya for the coronation of Rama as king. After the coronation, Sita gives Hanuman a pearl necklace, Hanuman, who does not understand its worth, breaks the pearls one by one to see what is inside. Finding nothing he throws them away. When he is asked why he does that, he simply answers, "Rama is not inside them, so what use were these."

### Exercise

- Based upon the reading, list three outstanding qualities of Hanuman.

## Worksheet 2: Hanuman and the Magic Herbs

*(Adapted from Chatterjee, Debjani. **The Monkey God and Other Hindu Tales**, Calcutta, India: Rupa and Co, 1993, pp.31-37)*

Prince Rama and his monkey army had come to Lanka to rescue Rama's wife, Sita, who was held prisoner by Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka.

Day after day they fought the huge and well armed forces of Ravana. The battles were long and hard and the monkeys were always outnumbered by the fierce demons. It was only because of the leadership of Rama, his younger brother Lakshmana, the monkey king Sugreeva, and of course the mighty Hanuman, that the monkeys were not defeated.

Ravana became very angry and his troops came back every evening tired and wounded, always making excuses for their inability to defeat the monkeys. Even his favorite brother, the giant Kumbarkarna, pointed out that the war was entirely Ravana's fault and that he should never hav captured Sita.

Next day, however, Kumbarkarna swallowed whole regiments of monkeys and spread terror all around him. Finally, Rama shot an arrow through his neck and killed him. Indrajit, Ravana's son, then stepped up his secret warfare. He hid behind clouds and then became invisible to his enemies. He showered arrows and missiles down on the poor monkeys. Indrajit used a powerful missile Brahma had given him to pierce Laksmana's chest. Laksmana fell fatally wounded. Indraji felt very happy because Laksmana was dead.

The monkey army was now in panic because they too heard the news that Laksmana was dead. Rama and King Sugreva went straight to the spot where Laksmana was carried.

King Sugreva's wise monkey doctor, Sushena, examined Laksmana and reported, "Noble Prince Rama, your brother is not dead, but he is dying. There is only one thing that could save him - the juice of the three magic herbs which must be given to him before sunrise tomorrow. These herbs can only be found on the slopes of the Dronagiri mountains in the Himalayas. Since there is no way in which we can get the herbs in time, " said Sushena sadly, "there is nothing tha we can do."

Upon hearing the doctor's words, Hanuman volunteered to fly all the way to the Himalayas and get the herbs. Even Rama doubted that Hanuman, after fighting hard all day, had enough strength to make the journey. Hanuman said he would try or die in the attempt.

Like lightening, Hanuman flew over Lanka, over the entire country of India, all the way to the Himalayas. There, Hanuman searched and searched but could not find one of the plants he needed. The hours of the night were passing quickly and Hanuman was still searching. Meanwhile, Rama held Laksmana's head on his lap and he, along with King Sugreva and the entire monkey army, waited breathlessly. Desperate at not being able to find the herb and realizing that he might be running out of time, Hanuman tore off the whole mountain peak at the base, placed it on his shoulder and flew as fast as he could to Lanka.

Everyone was relieved upon Hanuman's return. Sushena quickly found the herbs and administered them to Laksmana who revived instantly. Screams of joy could be heard throughou the camp and they all hailed Hanuman as their hero. Rama was extremely grateful. He embraced Hanuman, blessed him and told him that he, Hanuman, had his eternal thanks.

# Dharma in the Ramayana

## UNIT 10, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How does the Ramayana Reflect the Hindu Concept of Dharma?

### Main Ideas

- Dharma is defined by several relationships in the Ramayana.
- *Ramayana* is the blueprint of Hindu dharmic life. It can be called the "handbook on dharma."
- One's dharma depends on gender, caste, class and position in the family.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- define several key terms on the subject of dharma.
- explain how dharma is carried out through various relationships in the text
- analyze and make parallels between the "Dharam Raj" story and *Ramayana*.

### Teacher Background

*Dharma, karma and reincarnation are three terms that account for the whole existence of Hindus. The terms are as intertwined as the oxygen in one's blood and its function with the lungs. Dharma is one's actions in performing his/her duties, obligations and responsibilities in everyday life. Karma is one's fate and is decided by the tallying up of one's dharmic actions. The positive and negative dharmic actions are weighed together and this decides one's reincarnation status. For example, if a person led an evil life, (s)he may be reborn as an animal as a punishment. Conversely, if (s)he performed good deeds, (s)he may be rewarded by being reborn as a person from a high caste. Reincarnation is the belief that one's body goes in the earth at the time of death and that the soul is reborn into a different body that will either be rewarded or punished depending on the kind of karma that is accumulated after the previous birth's dharmic actions are tallied. Hindus do not believe in the concepts of heaven and hell. Life on earth serves as both one's heaven and one's hell. This is the function of the process called reincarnation. If one did well in terms of dharmic actions, (s)he will be rewarded and will move up on the corporate scale of life. Class, caste, and spiritual self will all be elevated. If one did not do so well, (s)he will be born naturally lower on the scale.*

### Springboard

***Dharma is the right conduct.***

We have multiple situations in life which require major decision making. Today, we are going to place ourselves in one of these situations.

- Teacher will divide class into groups. Each group will be given one of the situations stated below. Students will meet to determine a course of action. Groups will be selected to enact their role play for the entire class.

❶ You are the son of two old and ailing parents who need your care. In the fall of your senior year in high school you are offered a full scholarship to a prestigious university on the other side of the country. This scholarship is the only opportunity you will have to get a college education and provide for your family. Will you stay at home and take care of your parents or accept the scholarship?

❷ Arriving home late one night you find your home engulfed in flames. You have time to rescue just one person, your mother or your younger brother. Who will you rescue?

❸ You are in a life saving situation involving one hundred people. You know of only two options. One is you can save ninety of the people and ten will die. The other has only a fifty percent chance of success, but if successful all one hundred people will be saved. What will you do?

- How did you make your decision?
- What factors weighed heavily in this decision making process?

**Procedure**

▹ Teacher will provide definitions for the following words and place on chalkboard: dharma, karma, reincarnation.

*Ramayana* shows us some of the many functions of dharma in Hindu life. We will use excerpts as examples. Examining the various examples of dharma in the fraternal, marital, and governmental relationships in the Ramayana brings forth the relative nature of dharma.

▹ Divide class into cooperative learning groups. Distribute to each group either **Worksheet 1: Bharata's Visit to the Forest, Worksheet 2: The Banishments, or Worksheet 3: Vibhisana's Change of Allegiance**. Students will read excerpts on the worksheet and answer questions individually and then as a group.

▹ Teacher will debrief the class, using the graphic organizers below.

| Brothers | Dharma |
|---|---|
| Rama to Bharata (Worksheet 1) | |
| Bharata to Rama (Worksheet 1) | |
| Vibhisana to Ravana (Worksheet 3) | |
| Ravana to Vibhisana (Worksheet 3) | |

| Husbands and Wives | Dharma |
|---|---|
| Rama to Sita (Worksheet 2) | |
| Sita to Rama (Worksheet 2) | |
| King Dasaratha to Queen Kaikeyi (Worksheet 1) | |
| Queen Kaikeyi to King Dasaratha | |

| Rulers and Subjects | Dharma |
|---|---|
| Bharata to Kingdom of Ayodhya (Worksheet 1) | |
| Rama to Kingdom of Ayodhya (Worksheet 1,2) | |

- As presented in *Ramayana,* which is more important: the dharma of a brother to a brother (Bharata to Rama), or the dharma of a ruler to his subjects (Bharata to kingdom of Ayodhya)? Why?
- How is a husband's dharma to his wife different from a wife's dharma to her husband?
- How can the dharma of a man who is king conflict with the dharma he has as a husband?
- Can the dharma of a woman who is queen conflict with the dharma she has as a wife?

### Summary/Application

▹ Distribute **Worksheet 4: the "Dharam Raj" story**. Students will read the story and relate it to *Ramayana*.

- What parallels can you find between the two stories.

Students will share their answers, further discussing the universality of the epic.

## How does the Ramayana Reflect the Hindu Concept of Dharma?

### Worksheet 1: Bharata's Visit to the Forest

*(Excerpted from The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic, Spotlight on Ramayana)*

Laksmana called to Rama: "A Great army is approaching led by our brother, Bharata. I will kill him with my own hands."

"Don't be a fool," Rama said. "He is our brother and he is the king. We must welcome him.

Bharata embraced his brothers. He cited, "My heart is filled with grief and shame. Grief for the loss of our noble father. Shame for being offered the throne that you fight fully deserve. Come back to Ayodhya and be our king."

"That cannot be done," Rama said. "I gave my word and I shall stay here for fourteen years and no less. Then and only then will I return."

Nothing could sway Rama.

"Rama, my brother," Bharata declared, "as long as you are in exile no one shall be king. To ensure this give me your sandals. I will place them on the throne. For the next fourteen years I will serve the land in your name. And, if after those fourteen years, you do not return, I shall walk into a fire and die."

Bharata took the sandals, mounted his horse and left the forest. In Kosala, Bharata put Rama's sandals on the gold and red Ayodhya throne.

**Questions**

- How are Laksmana, Bharata, and Rama exhibiting different aspects of dharma in this excerpt?
- Bharata has refused to rule the kingdom. What are the implications of having a king who does not want to rule?
- Does Bharata's decision contradict the dharma of a king towards his people? Explain your answer.

## How does the Ramayana Reflect the Hindu Concept of Dharma?

### Worksheet 2: The Banishments

*(Excerpted from The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic, Spotlight on Ramayana)*

The following excerpts come from the beginning and the end of the Ramayana. Excerpt A is from the part of the story when Rama is banished from the city as a result of Queen Kaikeyi's boon. Excerpt B is from the end of the story when Rama banished Sita from Ayodhya.

**Excerpt A**

The king told Rama this terrible news. Rather than argue, Rama comforted his father and mother.

"Father, your word is law. I shall do whatever you bid. It is the sacred duty of a son to respect his father."

"Mother," he added, "Please be sure that father installs Bharata as crown prince."

Then Rama knelt and touched the feet of his father respectfully. He stood, turned, and left the palace.

Laksmana declared: "I shall destroy anyone who opposes your light to the throne."

Rama responded, " No Laksmana, you know it is my sacred duty, my dharma, to fulfill these wishes."

Rama tried to convince Sita to remain, but she said sobbing," And it is my duty, my dharma, as a wife to be at your side. How can I live without you? I must join you."

"Then, Sita, come with me." Rama said.

As the three left the palace, they cast away their royal robes and put on the robes of hermits. The people of Ayodhya wept as Rama, Sita and Laksmana passed from the city.

**Excerpt B**

Once back in Ayodhya, Rama seemed troubled. Many people in the city expressed doubt about Sita's faithfulness while in Lanka.

Laksmana came to see his brother. Rama turned to him and asked, "What is a king? Kings cannot be blamed or ridiculed. They are above all other men. They are beyond doubt."

"I know of what you speak, " his brother replied. "I hear the ugly rumors and lies."

"I have tried to think of a way to deal with this problem. I cannot rule Ayodhya and have my people not respect my queen. Therefore, I have made decision. Before dawn tomorrow you and Sumantra will take Sita back to the forest. Leave her there and return."

"But she will die."

"This is the nature of the world," Rama said. "this is what I must do."

Laksmana said sadly, "The dharma law is difficult to know and sometimes more difficult to follow. This act is wrong. There is no way that Sita would ever have disobeyed you or done what the people say. I know this in my heart."

"Do as I say, my brother."

Before sunrise, Ayodhya was shrouded in dense fog. It seemed as if the sun refused to show itself this fateful day.

**Questions**

- In what way is Sita's dharma different from Rama's dharma in these two excerpts?
- What is meant when Rama says to Laksmana, "This is the nature of this world"?
- For a Hindu, should the dharma of a king supersede that of a husband?
- For a Hindu, should the dharma of a wife supersede that of a queen? Explain your answers.

## How does the Ramayana Reflect the Hindu Concept of Dharma?

### Worksheet 3: Vibhisana's Change of Allegiance

*(Excerpted from The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic, Spotlight on Ramayana)*

Meanwhile back at Lanka palace, Vibhisana, Ravana's brother, tiled to save Sita's life. "Let her go," he said, "so we can save our kingdom from Rama's anger."

Ravana responded angrily, "If I return Sita, I will be ridiculed by all the gods and demons."

Vibhisana warned again, " Do not underestimate Rama's strength. It is said that Rama is an incarnation of Vishnu sent to earth to destroy all that is unholy. With his powers he will destroy Lanka. Why do you tempt such fate?"

"I fear no one, " Ravana roared.

"Then," Vibhisana said, "I can no longer remain in Lanka. Save yourself brother."

"Then go," shouted Ravana, "I have no place in my kingdom for the weak and timid."

Vibhisana left the palace and magically flew to Rama. Arriving at his camp, Vibhisana declared," I am the brother of Ravana. I tried to convince my brother to return your wife. But he refused and I left Lanka. I wish to fight at your side."

Rama responded, "Vibhisana, you have rejected evil for good. You are welcomed here."

### Questions

- How would you describe Vibhisana's abandonment of Ravana as dharma?
- What is the dharma of a demon?
- Compare and contrast Vibhisana's dharma with that of Bharata.

## Worksheet 4: Dharam Rai

*(This story was recounted by Shermila Bharat)*

A long time ago, there lived a king who was all things good and just. He loved his people, faithfully worshiped the gods and was very conscious of his dharmic duties.

The king started his day by doing obeisance to the gods and then proceeded to administer to his kingdom. Everyone in the kingdom knew that their king loved and cared for them more than he did his own happiness. He was generous to all who came to his door. He fed all beggars that passed through his kingdom and made sure that all orphans and widows were taken care of and anyone else who need his aid.

One morning as the king was praying, he noticed that his altar room was not as bright as it used to be. This he attributed to the mood of the gods. He thought he might have done something to incur their displeasure. He begged their forgiveness for anything he did to make them unhappy. He then went to administer to his people. He noticed that his wealth was depleting at a rather rapid rate. He searched in vain for an answer as to why this was occurring. The king did not dwell on his problem. He had faith in god and felt all would be well. He continued with his prayers every morning and then administered to his people.

Things did not get better. They became worse. The king started to notice that it wasn't just his wealth that was leaving him but the gods were also leaving. One day Lakshmi flew out the back window, another day Ram and Sita, followed by Vishnu and slowly the other gods as well.

Regardless of all that was happening, the king continued to uphold his dharma. He did not complain when his wealth left, he did not complain when the gods left, although he did inquire of Dharam Raj why this was so.

Dharam Raj replied, "You had in this palace the image of Lakshmi but not as the goddess of fortune. You had her in the form of the goddess of misfortune." The king thanked Dharam Raj for his explanation and proceeded to his daily routine of prayers and administration of his kingdom. As the king was doing his prayers he noticed that Dharam Raj was also packing his bags in an effort to leave him. This the king refused to let happen. He approached Dharam Raj, bowed to him, and proceeded to inform him of all the reasons why he couldn't leave the palace.

The king said, "Dharam Raj, when my wealth left me, I didn't utter a word of protest. I accepted it. The gods left me; again I did not protest their leaving. You, however, cannot leave me for you are my reason for existing. I have dedicated my entire life to serving you. If you leave, I have nothing! My entire life is of no consequence."

Dharam Raj could say nothing because everything the king said was true. The king never complained about his circumstances. He was devoted to Dharam Raj, the people of his kingdom and those who wandered in from afar. He, the king, was dharma personified. Dharam Raj then unpacked his luggage and moved back into his little house in the palace.

Once Dharam Raj's intention to stay became clear, all the gods had to move back into the palace. Lakshmi and Vishnu flew in through the backdoor, Krishna and Radha through the windows and so every one made their way back into the palace and took their proper seats.

As long as you have dharma in your home, god can never leave and if god is with you, your path is blessed.

**DHARAM RAJ KI JAI!**

## UNIT 11, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: Does Ramayana have Universal Application?

### Major Ideas

- Dharma and karma are central concepts in Hinduism.
- The ideas of dharma and karma are illustrated in the *Ramayana*.
- The ideas behind dharma and karma are shared by other cultures.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- define dharma and karma
- analyze dharma and karma as seen in the *Ramayana*
- relate dharma and karma to contemporary life in the form of a cartoon

### Teacher Background

*(This section excerpted from* ***Am I a Hindu?*** *by Ed. Viswanathan, Rupa & Co., 1993)*

*The concepts of dharma and karma are important in Hinduism. They appear in many places in The Ramayana and by examining dharma and karma, the students will better understand Hinduism. They will be able to compare and contrast those concepts with similar concepts found in other religions.*

*Dharma and karma can not be understood without examining the concept of reincarnation. The Hindus believe that lives are neither an accident or by chance; your actions in your past life determine your position in your next life. When you die, the body dies, but not the soul. The soul passes from one body to another after death like someone changing clothes. This is reincarnation, and it is also referred to as the transmigration of souls.*

*In Hinduism, one hopes that by doing your dharma (duty) righteously in this life, you will be reincarnated into a higher life form or caste in the next life. The Law of Karma is one of cause and effect." If you do good deeds in this life, chances are that you will be born into a higher caste in the next life or that something good may befall you later in this life. The opposite is also true, if something happens to you in this life, it can be attributed to bad karma either earlier in life or in a previous life. It is important to stress that the further along you are in a life the harder it is to trace which action led to your good or bad karma.*

*Hindus believe that everything in the universe is part of Brahman, the Hindu concept of a Supreme Being, the totality of all existence. Your soul must pass from one life form to another before it reaches one with Brahman. It is believed that there are four varnas or groups among human beings. When you are born in a human form, if you follow your dharma and fulfill your obligations to your varna and family, you may move up to a higher varna in the next life. In rank order, the varnas are the Brahmins (scholars and priests in the society), the Ksatriya (warriors in the society), the Vaisya (merchants) and the Sudras (untouchables who perform the necessary, but demeaning, jobs in society, for example, cleaning the latrines). If one is born into the Brahmin varna and he earns good karma through the execution of his dharma, the individual stands a good chance of uniting with the Supreme Being in the next life.*

### Springboard

- Teacher writes the following quote on the board: **"What goes around, comes around."**

✎ Students will write their thoughts of these words.

### Procedures

▹ Teacher will distribute **Worksheet 1: The Definitions of Karma and Dharma**. Teacher will allow students to complete worksheet and then review answers with class. Students will read their definitions of dharma and karma.

- List three dharma, or roles that you have at this present moment in time.

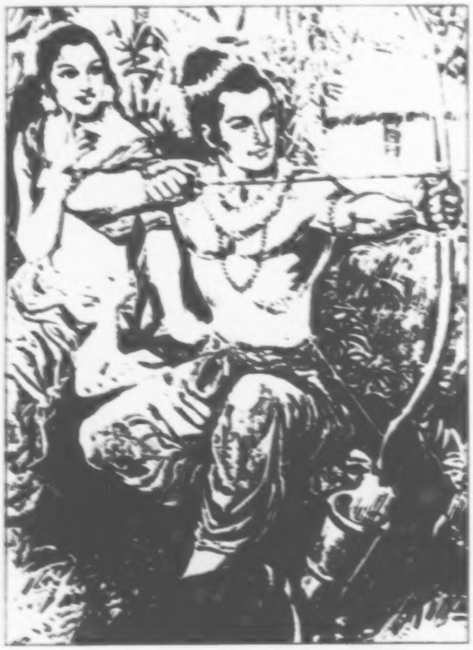
▹ Teacher will place students in groups of four. Distribute **Worksheet 2: Suggested Scenes From Ramayana**.

- What is the scene about?
- What actions are being taken?
- Will these actions produce good or bad karma?
- What dharma is being carried out?

Each group reports their answers to the entire class.

### Summary/Application

✎ Draw a cartoon of someone in American society carrying out their dharma (duty) in life. Remember focus on the action a person would take given a specific situation and role. This could be a famous person, TV star, or other personal hero.



Does Ramayana have Universal Application?

### Worksheet 1: The Definitions of Dharma and Karma

## Karma

- that which is done (or action) will determine what you are born to in your next life.
- the results of good and bad action.

**Explanation**

*Good Karma will lead to spiritual points called punya and so when your soul (atman) is reborn (reincarnation), Yama (the God of Death) may award you enough points so that you may rise to a higher plane in the next life. A person born to a Brahmin family would be considered to have good karma. It is important to note, that Hindus believe that if something good happens to a person later in life (having many sons, for example), the reason may be due to good karma from a past life or good karma earlier in this life. Bad karma (action) results in pap. If a girl is born with no legs, it is believed to be due to bad actions performed by her in a past life. Again, bad things that happen later in life may be due to actions in the individual's past life or earlier in the present life.*

In my life, **karma** means ______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

## Dharma

- good and righteous conduct in performing your life's roles.
- performing your role correctly given a certain situation and time.

**Explanation**

Hindus do not believe in killing animals. But if a parent sees a cobra (poisonous snake) about to attack his son, he would be fulfilling his dharma as a parent by killing the cobra. Given the situation, the protection of the child is the parent's main duty. Dharma is complex because it reflects not only your duty at a particular time and place, but also your dutyin life. For example, a king's duty to his kingdom would be his most important duty in life.*(Reprinted from* ***Hindu Values of Life: Karma and Dharma*** *by K.S. Mathur.)*

In my life, **dharma** means ______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Does Ramayana have Universal Application?

## Worksheet 2: Suggested Scenes from The Ramayana

*(The suggested scenes appear in* ***Rama*** *(comic book), Anant Pai, ed. H. G. Mirchandani, for India Book House Pvt. Ltd., 1992)*

| Scene | Page Numbers |
|---|---|
| I. King Dasharatha fulfills Kaikeyi's wishes | p. 7 to 9 |
| II. Rama agrees to be banished | p. 9 and 10 |
| III. Rama goes after the beautiful deer for Sita | p. 15 |
| IV. Lakshmana leaves Sita as she hears Rama call for him | p. 16 |
| V. Hanuman goes in search of Sita | p. 18 |
| VI. Rama kills Ravana | p. 30-31 |

*Teacher Note: The scenes suggested above may be found in a wide variety of sources - I selected this one because it is colorful and clearly written. If your students read the version of* ***Ramayana*** *included in the curriculum guide, they would use that one.*

| Role | Name |
|---|---|
| Group Reader | |
| Group Presenter | |
| Group Recorder | |
| Task Master - keeps the group focused. | |

Each group is to analyze one of the six scenes given to you from The *Ramayana*. Then respond to the following questions:

- What is the scene about?
- What actions are being taken in the scene and by whom?
- Do you think these actions will produce good or bad karma? Why?
- What dharma is being carried out?

## UNIT 11, LESSON 2

**Focus Question: What are the Cross-Cultural Aspects of Karma?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- understand karma and dharma through the sharing of their life experiences
- role play examples of good and bad karma (actions) in contemporary society.
- discuss and evaluate the universal application of dharma and karma.

### Teacher Background

*Yama is the god of death and he evaluates the actions of humans to determine their karma. Yama takes all of an individual's punya earned by performing good actions and measures it against all the pap earned by performing bad actions. If punya outweighs pap, Yama awards the individual with good karma. Conversely, if pap outweighs punya, Yama awards bad karma.*

*Free will and fate are concepts which are interwoven into Hinduism. Free will as American culture views it is the ability to make choices in life and, hence, to have control over your life. Fate is the idea that things are outside one's control: choices are predetermined as are the outcomes of your choices. In Hinduism, people believe that the karma you receive is out of your control, but that the karma you will receive is within your control. Given the situations you are presented with, one has the free will to do the right thing and hence earn good karma.*

### Springboard

- Students will share their cartoons in pairs, followed by the taping of the cartoons on the board and a whole group discussion about karma and dharma as they relate to our society.

### Procedure

- Students assemble into cooperative learning groups of four. Divide class into 2 main groups:

① role play a situation in which good karma is being earned

② role play a situation in which bad karma is being earned.

*(The groups are to be aware of only their role play situation.)*

- Distribute **Worksheet 3: Karma Role Play Situations**. Students have 5 minutes to prepare. Student groups select a student outside their group to be YAMA when it is their turn to role play. Students role play and Yama decides their destiny indicating the karma for that group situation.

### Summary/Application

- Students discuss what has happened to them during the role play. Students will then evaluate dharma and karma as universal issues.

  - Do you believe a person's actions are determined by fate or free will?

### Homework Assignment

In an essay, explain the concepts of dharma and karma and illustrate them using one or more examples from the *Ramayana* and from your own life.

## What are the Cross-Cultural Aspects of Karma?

## Worksheet 3: Role Play "Karma in Life"

**Instructions**: Students can decide who will **play** which role and as closely as possible, replicate the situation to the class.

### SITUATION ❶

Student A wants to cheat and does cheat from Student B. Student C sees this and reports it to Ms. Teacher.

### SITUATION ❷

Student A (female) is talking to Student B (male) during homeroom. Student B is Student C's boyfriend. Student C yells: "Leave my man alone, you ----------.

### SITUATION ❸

Student B watches for a clerk while Student A steals a CD. Student C is looking in the racks and the clerk is busy ringing up other customers.

### SITUATION ❹

Student A is crying because her boyfriend, Jim, just broke up with her. Seeing this students B, C, and D leave their lockers to go and comfort Student A.

### SITUATION ❺

Student B arrives home from school to find his Mother running behind in her party preparations. Student B offers to help her out by cleaning the den. Brother J arrives home and even though he has tennis plans, he also pitches in.

### SITUATION ❻

Students A, B, and C are making fun of Student D. Student D is singing popular songs and does not understand the students are making fun of him. Suddenly, Student C realizes what is happening, leaves the group, and opens a magazine.

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## UNIT 12, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: Debating Rama as a Hero

- Students will use critical thinking to evaluate characters' actions and to develop their cases.
- Students will utilize writing skills by writing essays for homework and in class to explain their decisions in the trial.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- identify the major characters in the *Ramayana* and evaluate each character's role in the epic.
- compare and contrast different perceptions of character's actions.
- evaluate characters as role models in Hindu society and the degree to which they are heroes and villains.

### Teacher Background

*Teachers and students should read one or both of the following: The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic,* ***Spotlight on Ramayana****, or The Ramayana, by R.K. Narayan, Penguin Books USA, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1972.*

### Materials for Class

Students may wish to bring physical evidence to the debate. Some good examples include: "God" posters showing Rama acting heroically, posters showing Ravan abducting Sita, posters showing Rama taking fruit from an untouchable, pictures of Surpanakha with her nose cut off, jewels dropped by Sita, symbolizing the end of her marriage to Rama.

### Pre-Activity

Students will identify the following characters: Hanuman, Laksmana, Lava and Kush, Rama, Ravana, Sita, Sugriva, Surpanakha, Vali.

They will choose three of these characters and

- Give one example of each character's interaction with Rama
- Indicate whether or not you think this scene shows Rama as a true hero. Be sure to explain your reasons.

### Springboard

- Lead the class in a discussion of heroes. Some suitable questions might include:

  - Who are your heroes?
  - Do you think your heroes are perfect? Explain your answer.
  - Do you think heroes must be perfect?
  - Have any of your heroes disappointed you?
  - Can you think of any heroes in our society who do not deserve such recognition?
  - Based upon what you have read, what actions of Rama in the *Ramayana* might indicate that Rama is not a hero?

**Procedure**

Many of you seem to believe that Rama is not a blameless hero but a person guilty of errors. (Teacher should refer to Rama's behavior against the rakshas, his treatment of Sita and other examples.) Our task is to have a DEBATE about Rama as a hero. These same questions are often raised in India where Rama's actions are not always thought perfect.

*(The following chart is taken from "E.V. Ramasami's Reading of The Ramayana,"* ***Many Ramayanas****. Richman, Paula. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1991, pp.183. It will be useful for students to refer to in preparing the debate.)*

| Character | Role | Charges against the character |
|---|---|---|
| Dasartha | Rama's father, ruler of Ayodha | Was enslaved by passion; broke promises; acted stupidly |
| Sita | Wife of Rama | Criticized her husband; felt attraction to Ravana; was unchaste; cared too much for jewelry |
| Bharata | Dasaratha's second son (by Kaikeyi) | Heaped abuse on his mother; insulted his father; had many wives |
| Laksmana | Third son of Dasaratha (by Sumitra), loyal companion to Rama | Was attracted to Sita, tortured (demon) females; made unfilial statements about his father; was hot-headed |
| Satrughna | Fourth son of Dasartha (by Sumitra), companion to Bharata | Insulted Kaikeyi; abused and disregarded his father |
| Kausalya | Senior wife of Dasaratha, mother of Rama | Possessed excessive concern for the success of her son; was jealous of Kaikeyi and hostile to her; did not respect her |
| Sumitra | Youngest wife of Dasartha, mother of Laksmana and Satrughna | Was eager for Rama to become king; was prejudiced against Bharata |
| Sumantra | Charioteer and advisor to Dasaratha | Counseled the king to do improper deeds; spoke derisively of Kaikeyi; lied |
| Vasistha | Dasaratha's family guru | Participated in the plot to crown Rama; hurriedly fixed a day for the coronation so that Bharata would not find out |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hanuman | Rama's monkey companion, who set fire to Lanka | Is said to have performed miraculous deeds which scientific reason indicates are impossible; unjustly set fire to Lanka and thus killed many innocent people; used obscene language when conversing with Sita |
| Sugriva | King of monkeys, alley of Rama | Betrayed his brother; joined Rama only to get rid of his brother |
| Angada | Son of Valin, general in Sugriva's army | Befriended those who killed his brother; did not really love Sugriva |
| Vibhisana | Brother of Ravana | Betrayed his brother and caused his death in order to gain the kingship of Lanka; did not feel anger when his sister was dishonored by Laksmana |

## Directions for Conducting a Debate

① Divide the class into thirds.

**Debate Team 1**: Rama is a Hero
**Debate Team 2**: Rama made mistakes and is NOT a Hero
**Audience.** Teacher will act as a moderator or assign a student that role.

② Divide each team into smaller groups. Each must choose an issue about Rama's life that they will argue. Students may choose to playact a character from the *Ramayana* as part of their debate and argue from the view point of that person the correctness of Rama's actions. Thus a student might pretend to be Sita and argue that Rama should have listened to his countrymen and banished her. (Team 1) or she might argue that Rama was an awful husband because he banished her (Team 2).

③ Give each team 10 minutes to argue their case. Each side may then have 5 minutes for rebuttal of the other's argument.

④ The audience can then decide which team they felt made the best argument and won the debate. They must explain and defend their decision.

▸ Directly after the debate, the students will divide into groups to analyze each of the debate teams. Appropriate questions to examine might be:

**Debate Team 1**: Rama is a Hero
- What were your main arguments?
- Which questions did you think were your best?
- How well did you anticipate the evidence of the opposition?

**Debate Team 2**: Rama made Mistakes and is Not a Hero
- What were your main arguments?
- Which questions did you think were your best?
- How well did you anticipate the evidence of the opposition?

**Audience**
- According to what values should Rama be judged. What is his dharma?

### Summary/Application

- How are heros in Western "classics" culture judged?
- What if you used the same criteria to judge Rama?
- What if you used the same criteria to judge Martin Luther King Jr.?
- What if you used the same criteria to judge yourself?

- Now that the debate is over, do you think Rama was wrong or not?

✎ Write an essay explaining your opinion. Be sure to cite specific examples in your essay.

### Additional Strategies

This procedure can be altered to a trial format. Witness testimony (stories that illustrate Rama's "guilt" or "innocence") can be used to support each side's argument. However, teachers should be aware that debating Rama's actions is acceptable to Hindus, but putting Rama on trial is not. Hence we urge the debate format for it's cultural sensitivity.

# Chapter IV

## How Can Ramayana Help Us Gain an Understanding of Hindu Rituals?

## UNIT 13, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: What is the Most Common Form of Ritual for Hindus?

### Major Ideas

- Hindus perform a ceremony called *puja* for the gods. Pujas vary by community, family and person. Pujas demonstrate service to and love for the deity worshiped.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- identify the parts of the *puja*
- understand the potential for different styles of puja
- compare a puja to rituals in their own faith.

### Teacher Background

*The most common form of worship of Rama and Sita, as well as Hanuman and other heros of the Ramayana, is a ritual called puja. Puja is a ritual form that developed in India about 800 A.D. as a form of personalized devotion to the gods. The popularity of the puja ritual coincides with the growth of the popularity of the Ramayana, and many new versions of the Ramayana were written in the centuries following 800 A.D., in various parts of India.*

*Puja is popular because it is a ritual that does not require a Brahmin priest and it can be performed by men an women, low castes and high castes. It can also be personalized, so that each person and/or family can select those deities whom they desire to worship. Hence pujas vary immensely across India, geographically and in time.*

*This lesson involves students in the enactment of one puja: while it is to the god Ganesh, the form would remain similar no matter what god or goddess is worshiped. Each god and goddess has particular desires, so the foods offered might change to meet the deity's particular tastes. Each day of the week is also associated with a particular deity, as are many days of the month. The lessons in Unit 20 (Johnson and Sills) provide you with a vision of geographic and seasonal change and could be used in conjunction with this enactment.*

*In the Ramayana, Sita performs a puja as Rama arrives in Ayodhya to attempt to win her hand by breaking the magic bow. She worships a goddess to help her attain a good virtuous husband. Most pujas are performed out of love and devotion to the deity, and also to attain some goal (as Catholics might light a candle before a shrine to the Virgin Mary or some other saint).*

### Springboard

- Teacher will pass out comic book on Ganesh, the elephant headed god, and read this myth with the class.

  - Why do you think this story is important?
  - What does it say about the responsibilities of Ganesh to, Lord Shiva, Parvati and to himself?
  - Why was it an acceptable alternative for Ganesh to receive an elephant head?
  - Could another region In India conceivably choose to tell this myth with a different ending? How?

### Procedure

▸ Students will view a short video (17 minutes).

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 1: Viewing Sheet for Puja**, and distribute **Worksheet 2: Some Uncommon Offerings**. Instruct students to complete Worksheet sheet 1 during viewing. Worksheet 2 is designed to assist students in understanding the pujas.

▸ Give students time to ask questions after watching the puja ceremony being performed. Note how this man is dressed for his puja.

- What role does the deity hold in the ceremony?
- How does he prepare himself for this worship?
- What seems to be the most important parts of puja?
- When are the women of the house asked to take part in this ceremony? Could a woman do the ceremony?
- How important is this in a Hindu's daily life?

(Note: *Teachers can find videos of pujas in the film* ***Wages of Action****, and other films available at the South Asia Resource Centers located at the University of Texas, Chicago, Wisconsin, California-Berkeley, Washington, Pennsylvania and Virginia as well as at Cornell, Syracuse and Columbia Universities. The staff at these centers can advise you about a good choice from their holdings.*

### Summary/Application

Review viewing sheets with class.

- What features of the puja looked somewhat familiar to you? Why?
- What features of the puja were somewhat unfamiliar? Why?
- How would you compare the puja to your own religious rituals?

What is the Most Common Form of Ritual for Hindus?

Worksheet 1: Viewing Sheet for Puja.

❶ Who is performing the puja?

❷ How is the person performing the puja dressed? Do you notice anything unusual?

❸ What Indian gods are included in the puja?

❹ Many foods are included in the puja. What did you notice?

❺ Was their anything else used during the puja that seemed unusual to you? Explain.

❻ What were some of your responses to the puja?

## What is the most Common Form of Ritual for Hindus?

### Worksheet 2: Some Uncommon Offerings

Some of the substances used for offerings in a *puja* are not common items of every-day use in our own culture. But for Hindus, these are often the most "auspicious" ingredients in the puja. Something is auspicious if it is thought to be important for life, producing good luck and happiness. Here is a list of some of the most auspicious (and least familiar) offerings included in a puja:

- **turmeric** - a yellow powder used in cooking most Indian dishes. Mixed with water, this powder (which has antiseptic qualities) is also used to "paint" the feet of women before visiting the temple or attending other religious events. It is considered cooling and therefore desirable to offer to a guest.

- **sindoor** or **kum-kum** - a red powder traditionally used to make a mark on the foreheads of women (to show they are married or for purely cosmetic purposes) or men (for religious purposes). This powder is offered to the god or goddess at the temple and then handed back to the worshiper as a mark of the god--a substance of sharing. Another custom, common in some of the upper castes in South India is when a visitor or family member is leaving the house. The woman of the house places a little of this powder on the person's forehead as a form of blessing, as if to say "be protected".

- **ghee**--is melted butter with the fats removed so that it is clear. This is the way that butter can be stored for long periods of time in a hot climate without spoiling. Ghee is considered the purest cooking oil in India and it can also be used for burning in a lamp. The offering of ghee also relates to a much older form of religious worship in India known as *yajna*. Yajna was a type of fire ceremony in which ladles full of ghee were poured into the flames of a sacred fire while priests chanted hymns to the gods. Yajna is still practiced on special occasions by Hindus and there are some similarities between yajna and puja. One of the main differences is that in yajna, no images of gods are used as in puja.

- **camphor** - is a highly flammable, solid substance that is used in many medicines, even here in America. (It smells a little like Vicks.) It is burned and waved on a lamp in front of the god at the end of the puja. This is called "giving *arathi*". After offering this smoke to the god, the people present also smell some of this smoke. Hindus like the smell of burning camphor and so they like this part of the ceremony very much.

- **rice grains** - while we might not offer our house guest grains of uncooked rice, they are offered to the gods as a way to acknowledge the importance of growing food. By offering grains, people are asking the god's blessings on and protection over the crops on which their lives depend.

## UNIT 13, LESSON 2

**Focus Question: How do Hindus "Personalize" the Daily Pūja for Themselves and their Families?**

### Major Ideas

- Hindus choose a deity for their own puja. Hindus shorten or lengthen puja to fit their life style. What is offered to deity is decided by what type of food is offered in their region.

### Teacher Background

*This lesson is an enactment of a puja, not a "doing" of a puja. It is important to alert students to the fact that they are play acting, not worshiping the gods. Nevertheless, they must understand that respect for this enactment is important.*

### Procedure

The puja ceremony will be performed by the teacher. The teacher should have a "shrine" set up before class enters, and she should preferably be dressed in a sari or other appropriate Indian clothing. The shrine should be set up on a table facing the students who could be asked to sit on the floor or the shrine could be on the floor and the students could be in a semicircle behind the teacher. This is an enactment and may be as flexible as need be.

- Teacher will Distribute **Worksheet 3: Puja Scripts**.

- Teacher will enact puja, as given in the enclosed script. Students will follow the puja script while the teacher performs the puja. The students can join in on the chants. (Alternately, students may enact the puja themselves, singly or in groups. Students may also make their own image of Ganesh, using play dough and costume jewelry.)

If students do their own enactment, either on this day or the following one, they can be encouraged to dress in Indian clothing. Instructions on wearing a sari (6 yards of cloth) are available from most South Asian Resource Centers.

Cookies (coconut cakes) may be shared with students at completion of enactment.

- How did this Puja differ from the one seen in the video?
- Make some comparison/contrasts to certain aspects of the two different Pujas.
- Is each one correct? Would they both be accepted in some households in the Hindu faith?
- What basic components could be found in each one?

### Summary/Application

This puja was to Ganesh, the god who removes obstacles. How would you change it to honor Rama or Sita or Hanuman? Encourage groups of students to rewrite the script to represent their knowledge of these other gods and goddesses.

- How would you change the words of the puja?
- How would you change the offerings?

202

Remind students that variations in the puja are common in India. Each individual chooses the god or goddess they most admire.

**Alternative/Enrichment Assignment**

✎ Students can be given a written assignment in the form of newspaper article.

The student is a journalist for the local newspaper and has been given the assignment of interviewing a Hindu family that has recently moved into the community from India.

Because there are few Hindus in this community, the editor is primarily interested in the new family's religion. Remember to choose an Indian name for the family.

**Include in your interview**

- ✔ basics of Hinduism
- ✔ importance of specific parts for them
- ✔ if they perform a daily puja, does it differ from the way they did it in India?
- ✔ how can the community help the new family feel welcomed

**Ideas to use for Interview**

Caste
karma
dharma
reincarnation
vegetarianism
daily puja
importance of religion to parents and teenagers in family

## How do Hindus "Personalize" the Daily Puja for Themselves and Their Families?

### Worksheet 3: Enactment of Puja

*(Script for enactment of puja written by R. Gupta and S. Wadley, Syracuse University)*

**Beginning**

"Now begins the worship for the fourth lunar day of the Lord of Troops, Ganesha." *(Bow to the Honorable Ganesha).*

**Vow**

"On this holy day in my humble way, with as much preparation as possible, in order to gain the fruits designated in revealed texts, remembered texts and traditional texts, and in order to get sons, grandsons, wealth, knowledge, victory, success, fortune, life, and all other wished-for things in this as well as future births, and in order to order to propitiate the godling, Chief of Accomplishment (Siddhi Vinayaka), I shall do the worship of the royal Head of the Troupes (Ganapati), reciting verses (mantras) from the Purusa hymn and from texts of tradition, while performing water-giving, bringing in gifts and performing rituals." *(Bring in the idol, place on seat of **worship** and perform the six limbs (parts) of the Purusa hymn:)*

"O Ganapati, you are the leader of your followers, and so I do this worship. Next I do the worship of his seat with the six limbs of the Purusa hymn. Visnu stays at the mouth of the water vessel; here I do the worship. As it is born in the ocean, I worship this conch. As it calls the god, the bell is worshiped."

**Meditation**

"Meditate on the god who has one tooth, fan-like ears, the mouth of an elephant, four arms, and who holds the lasso and the halberd. Meditate on him whose body is huge and who has the luster of hot gold, with a garland of Ruara beads in his hand, and who has garments all rich and fine. Sea of Compassion, take a coconut cake in your trunk. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka. I present the meditation." *(Sit quietly with straight back, breathing deeply for a few moments.)*

**Water-giving**

"I offer you water with fruit, sandalwood paste, flowers and unbroken grains of rice, 0 Leader of the Troupes, Sea of Compassion. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka. I present the giving of water by hand.." *(Offer water with right hand only with ritual spoon. Pour on the image.)*

**Offering Honey Mixture**

"I offer this sprinkling of curds (yogurt) mixed with honey. I bow to Gananatha, Lord of All the Assembly. I present the honey mixture." *(Offer honey mixture as water was offered).*

**Ghee Bath**

"Ghee is used in the meals of the gods. Ghee upholds the sacrifice. Ghee is very holy. Take it back for a bath. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka. I present the ghee bath. After the ghee bath, I present the water sipping. For the whole worship, I present unbroken grains." *(Pour a little ghee on image, then sip a small amount of water with your right cupped hand. Then present a few grains of rice.)*

**Clothing**

"Here are two cloths blood-red in color, 0 Light of the Gods, Wealthy, All-bestowing, Lord of the Assembly, Long-bellied, Born of Shiva's Soul. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka. I present clothing." *(Offer cloths.)*

**Red Powder**

Take back this heavenly red lead powder, the ornament of heroes, which is in color like the sky of sunrise and sunset. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinakaya. *(Offer red powder.)*

**Flowers and Leaves**

I present these flowers, 0 Lord Ganesh. Reciting the thousand names of Ganapati I offer blades of grass. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka." *(Offer flowers, leaves and/or blades of grass).*

**Incense**

"Presenting incense of sandal and jasmine, I bow to you, Son of Uma, Lord of All the Household Gods. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka." (Offer lighted incense).

**Lamp**

"All-knowing, Lord of All Peoples, Remover of pain from the three worlds, I present the lamp which is auspicious to the household. I bow to you, Beloved of Rudra. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka." *(Offer lighted lamp).*

**Water for Washing**

"Water scented with cardamom, fragrant herbs, clove, and camphor for the completion of eating, 0 Leader of the Assembled Troops. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka. I present the middle watering. I present the second watering. I present the hand-washing. I present the face-washing." *(Offer a spoonful of water while reciting each of these phrases.)*

**Fruit**

"Take these fruits 0 heavenly Leader of the Assembled Troops. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka." *(Offer fruits.)*

**Coconut Cakes**

"I offer twenty-one coconut cakes cooked with ghee as a dish to follow the fruit. I bow to the Destroyer of Obstacles. I bow to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka." *(Offer coconut cookies.)*

**Prayer**

"I bow to Vinayaka, Ganesha, and all the gods. Beloved of Parvati, Lord of Obstacles, destroy my obstacles."

**Forgiveness**

"Mistakes by the thousands... I revoke. Destroy the errors...whether caused by verses, or caused by actions, due to breathing, knowledge, or sleepiness, in the minor ceremonies done in the course of your worship, 0 beloved godling, Sri Siddhi Vinayaka." *(Now offer the camphor. Use metal holder to burn and pass in front of the image 3 times in a clock-wise direction. Afterwards, all present also bring the smoke up to their faces using both hands, three times. This marks the end of the ceremony.)*

**Gifts**

When the worship is complete, offer the sweets presented to the gods to all present.

# Life Cycle Rituals: Birth (The Name Ceremony) "Namakarna"

## UNIT 14, LESSON 1

**Focus Question: What are the Cross Cultural Aspects of Name-Giving?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- understand the significance and origins of birth rituals in their own cultures.
- investigate birth rituals in their own cultures
- transfer their knowledge about birth rituals of their own culture to understanding birth rituals of other cultures.

### Teacher Background

*(Adapted from* ***The Living Arts of India****, a Smithsonian and UN Publication)*

*In the Hindu Indian culture, the selection of a name for a newborn child is a momentous decision. In many regions of India, it is believed that the choice of a* ***propitious*** *name will enhance the child's ability to lead a successful life. Often the names of deities or qualities associated with them are considered desirable for the attainment of similar qualities: For example:*

*Saraswati = Goddess of Learning and Prosperity*
*Lakshmi = Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity*
*Ganesha = Remover of Obstacles*

*Hindu parents like to give their children the names of deities because they know they will repeat the child's name often and believe that saying a deity's name earns them spiritual merit each time they utter it.*

*Hindu babies are intensely and intimately attached to their mothers for the first three or four years of life. The baby is constantly held by its mother, crooned and talked to. It is picked up at the slightest whimper and fed on demand. Without any push, the Indian toddler takes his or her own time learning to walk and to control its bowels.*

*Within the wide diversity of India (distinct regional, linguistic, caste and religious groupings) there is a unified cultural awareness of the child. This cultural awareness includes an intense parental longing for children, especially sons who will carry on the family line. A daughter will go the house of her husband's parents, but a son will bring a daughter-in-law into the home and a son will provide for the parents in their old age. There are also religious reasons (to be mentioned later) why parents prefer sons. Nevertheless, girls are also valued as they are thought to bring prosperity to households.*

*In greatly valuing children, Hindus celebrate many early childhood rituals from the time of conception and throughout babyhood. The name giving ceremony is only one of many celebrated for the new child. Others include a rite (****godha-bharana****) honoring the expectant mother (with gifts of a new sari, glass bangles and culturally valued food.)*

*The first rite after birth is* ***jatakarma****, which is done in many regions of India just after delivery. After* *the newborn is cleansed, the father comes in to look at the baby's face. It is believed that the parental act of looking at a first-born son will absolve the father of all his debts to the gods and to his ancestors. The birth of a girl is slightly less meritorious. Her gift in marriage brings the father spiritual merit and appreciably increases the store of his good* **karma** *(karma is the fruits of one's good or evil actions which affect one's destiny.)*

*The* **namakarna** *or the name giving ceremony is the next* **samskara** *or life cycle ritual performed at the child's third or fourth month, the child's first outing or "looking at the sun and looking at the moon (called* **nishakramana***) is celebrated. This rite signifies the infant's introduction to the world and the cosmos.*

*Between the sixth and ninth months, the important rite of* **annaprashana** *marks the first time a child is given solid food and signifies the process of the child's separation from its mother. In this rite, after saying prayers to a goddess, a priest offers oblations to an infant's ancestors in his name. This, in a formal sense, connects the infant to past generations. Guests present the infant with gifts, which minimally include a set of eating utensils.*

*In our lessons, we will focus on the birth ritual of name giving, because it is a very accessible and dramatic ritual which has many correspondences with Western religious birth-rituals, such as christening, baptism and bris whereby students can make cross-cultural connections.*

**Springboard**
Teacher will bring in an object and ask,

- What is this called? How do you think it got that name?
- We all have names also. Does anyone know the meaning of his/her name?
- If you have a nickname, how did you get it? What does it mean?

**Procedure**
▸ Students read **Worksheet 1: My Name**, a short story by Sandra Cisneros.

- Students underline three or more parts of the text which they like most (a word, phrase or sentence.)
- Seated in a circle, students each read one of their own selections aloud, recreating the text.

**Summary/Application**
✎ Students write about the origins and meaning of their own names, telling a story about their first name. For Homework students will interview an older family member for further information about their name. They will also research family religious birth ceremonies associated with naming such as christening, baptism or bris.

## What are the Cross Cultural Aspects of Name-giving?

### Worksheet 1: My Name

*(Sandra Cisneros.* ***The House on Mango Street****. New York, NY: Vantage Books, 1989.)*

In English, my name means hope. In Spanish, it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing.

It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse - which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female - but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name - Magdalena - which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza.

I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

## UNIT 14, LESSON 2

**Focus Question: How Does Naming a Child Differ Among Cultures?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- identify ritual acts specific to different religions
- compare and contrast different birth rituals in different religions.
- share knowledge about birth rituals, evaluating differences.

### Teacher Background

*Our Western religious birth rituals which have a name aspect include christening, baptism and bris. Christians believe that humans are born with sin. They believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, and they can be saved from sin if they follow his teachings.* ***Baptism*** *is a Christian symbol for washing away this "original" sin so that a person can start again. Some Christians talk about baptism as a "second birth." A Baptism is a ritual performed in the Episcopalian, Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist and other Christian Churches.*

***Christening****, a Christian ceremony celebrating the baptism and naming of a child in the Catholic Church. It is held between the first to sixth months after birth. It is a five to ten minute ceremony held during or at the end of Mass. During the christening, a priest puts the baby's head back and pours water on it to cleanse the child of sin. Special clothing, a white christening gown, is worn by the child and normally handed down in the family. The mother holds the baby and the father is next to her. The godparents stand on either side. Surrounding them is the immediate family involved in the ritual and the family sits in the front pews. In the ritual the priest says a blessing to forgive the child for original sin (Adam and Eve's sin of eating the apple and of having sex.) saying, "May God forgive..." The priest says the child's formal name, thus validating that the child is raised in the Catholic Church (a godparent is a child's spiritual guardian, who is a relative or friend of the family.)*

***Episcopalian*** *baptism is usually done when the baby is less than a year old. It is done during the regular Sunday service. It occurs at the back of the church at a Baptismal font (stone receptacle.) The mother holds the child and gives it to the clergyman. Parents, godparents and grandparents all stand next to the Baptismal fount. The clergyman asks the child's name. Parents and godparents answer his questions about raising the child as a Christian. The clergyman then holds the child and does the Baptism by putting water on the forehead or top of the child's head, and recites a prayer.*

***Presbyterian*** *baptism is essentially the same as the Episcopalian ritual with the following differences: (a) There are no godparents; (b) It is done in the front of the Church, on the altar. (*This simple form of baptism can be done later in life for those not baptized in infancy.)*

***Bris*** *(also called Brit or Meilah): This Jewish ritual is required of all Jewish boy infants at the age of 8 days. The Bris is a ceremony to welcome the child into Judaism and includes a circumcision - a small piece of skin is cut from the boys penis - and the selection of the child's name.*

*The ceremony is held at the front of the temple. The mother is allowed to be present, but sometimes isn't there for the circumcision (if she doesn't wish to watch). The person who performs the circumcision is the Mohel. This is his special religious job. During the ceremony, the baby boy is held by an older male relative called a Sandick. Performing the role of Sandick is considered a special honor. Some wine is put on* *the baby's tongue with a wine soaked cloth before the circumcision. The Mohel performing the circumcision says the name of the child, but does not explain its meaning.*

*Conservative, Reform, and Orthodox Jewish Temples have welcoming/naming ceremonies for baby girls. The ceremony is performed by a Rabbi. Afterwards there is a party. Jewish babies can be named according to two main Jewish groups the family descends from: Eastern European (Askenazic) - the child is named for a deceased ancestor; or Spanish or Arabic (Sephardic) - the child is sometimes given the first name of the father not the mother.*

## Springboard

> **"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."**
> \- *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare

- What is Juliet saying to Romeo?
- Is a person's name important? Why or Why not?

## Procedure

▹ Review homework, having students read aloud their stories about their names and about the respective religious birth/naming ceremonies celebrated in their families.

▹ Write the word "name" on the board.

- What comes to mind when they hear this word?

▹ Ask students to identify common cultural acts surrounding the naming of a child. (For example, naming for a parent or for a deceased relative, a priest or other holy person leading the rite, clothing, age of child, use of water and/or other substances, place of ritual, who is present? feasting afterwards?)

▹ Organize name/birth ritual events by religion by circling acts or events concerning each religion in a different color chalk.

✔ List acts or events for each religion together in the "notes" side of their formal in double entry fashion, leaving the "response" side blank for now.

## Summary/Application

✎ **Double-entry Journal Writing**: This approach to journal writing is used at the close of Day 2 (Procedure) and Day 4 (Summary/Application). It is a useful way of guiding students to further reflect upon the ideas in their original notes or writing.

- Using a spiral or bound notebooks, approximately 8 ½" X 11", ask students to open their journals to a clean page so that the notebook has two pages facing each other.

- Ask the students to label their left and right pages as above. Students will write their notes first on the left side. The response side is filled in later as a reflection upon the "notes." This "response" may take the form of comments, questions, or explanations.)

- Quotes from any text used in class can be entered in the notes side & similarly responded to. In this usage, the journal functions as a literature log.

- When students first begin their journal, you might ask them to leave the first 3-4 pages blank. They will later create a Table of Contents of the writing in their journals.

- Have students share (in pairs) their lists of birth ritual acts for each religion and discuss similarities and differences they notice in the birth/naming ritual in different religions or religious sects. Report to the class.

**Homework**

▹ In your journal, next to your list of acts or events for each religion's birth/naming ritual, respond (in double entry form) by writing on the opposite page, your response in the form of a comment, question or explanation.

▹ Define these words: ritual, rite ceremony, name, incarnation, reincarnation, birth, puberty, marriage, death.

**Alternate Strategies**

*Rangoli* or *Mandna* Wall and Floor Painting. (refer to UNIT 1 for Worksheet on Rangoli and Mandna Wall and Floor Painting). See **Worksheet 2: Instructions for Rangoli and its Meaning** and following illustrations for activities.

## Worksheet 2: Instructions for Rangoli (and its Meaning)

*Rangoli* is a ritual wall and floor painting done by women throughout India. In Rajasthan, as elsewhere in India, the six major annual Hindu festivals, plus life cycle rituals of childbirth, birth naming, marriage and other important events are commemorated with rangoli painted in white paint upon floors and walls.

Almost every floor space and all rooms where people gather are decorated with Rangoli, called Mandna in Rajasthan. The patterns are created from intertwining, geometric figures, often laid out in a hexagram. Most designs are symmetrical. Large rangoli are filled with dots, triangles, diamonds and parallel lines. They often also include a smaller design thought to symbolize the feet of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, to invite her into a home. (See patterns for rangoli in UNIT 1)

### Materials for Rangoli

- A large sheet or sheets of brown paper or several colored pieces of large oaktag (red or brown)
- Patterns for a model (UNIT 1, Worksheet on Rangoli)
- Pencils and rulers
- Small bowls
- White poster paint
- White cotton balls, newspaper, paper towels
- ½" brushes

### Directions for Rangoli

❶ Have students create prototype sketch in pencil.

❷ Students paint by dipping their fingers in white poster paint or use ½" brushes and trace over their pattern

❸ Since this is a messy activity, it might be best done at the end of the day or after school to allow adequate time for cleanup and for the Mandna to dry.

*(Adapted from* ***The Living Arts of India****, Teacher's Manual, Chapters 4,5,6 & 7. Kate Rinzler Smithsonian Institution & UN Children's Fund pp. 59-63)*

Students can create rangoli patterns on large sheets of paper to be used as a background in the ritual enactment of the name giving ceremony. With careful planning, the teacher may offer the opportunity for artistically inclined students to prepare a Mandna for the class performance.

If possible, show the birth rituals in the video "Life Cycle Rituals" in "The Living Arts of India" video series.

## UNIT 14, LESSON 3

**Focus Question: What are the Important Aspects of the Hindu Name Giving Ceremony?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- describe the ritual of the Hindu Naming Ceremony.
- understand Hindu names and their meaning significance in Hindu life.
- write a script for their own character (role) in the Hindu Naming Ceremony.

### Teacher Background

*These Hindu naming lessons should provide students with insight into the importance of religious life cycle rituals in the daily lives of Hindu people and in their own lives.*

*An important tenet of Hinduism is the belief in reincarnation. In believing in rebirth, Hindus recognize the soul as immortal and as being continuously reborn. Hindus believe that the soul continues to experience countless life cycles of birth, puberty, marriage and death until the soul or higher self is able to control its lower temporal vehicles and (through many lives of spiritual self discipline) achieve union with divinity.*

*This aeonial, cycle perception of material and spiritual realty differs greatly from the Christian/Judaic view of a child's birth and life as a linear series of one time events. Thus, while Christianity and Judaism celebrate the important life cycle rituals of birth, puberty, marriage and death, Western culture tends to view these universal rituals in the context of more fragmented, less holistic view of life than does Hindu culture.*

### Springboard

▸ Draw a circle on the board, divided into quadrants **birth, puberty, marriage, death**. We call these four stages in our lives the "rites of passage."

✎ Ask students to write in their journals in response to the question:

- Why do you think people throughout the world celebrate such rituals as birth, puberty, marriage and death?
- Why do they usually celebrate these times with loved ones?

### Procedure

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 3: The Hindu Naming Ceremony** (namakarna) and **Worksheet 4: Lullabies**. Teacher reads it aloud, students follow.

▸ Students will use the sequence of steps in the Hindu Naming Ceremony as a model for writing their own script of this ritual (in groups).

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 5: Girls and Boys Names and Their Meaning**. Divide class into groups of six, with each group writing its own script. Each student in his/her group will write the speaking part for his/her character. *(The sequence of events should be studied carefully. Some characters have more than one turn to speak and or perform an action. Each student must prepare the entire spoken text and perform the related actions for his or her character.)*

## Summary/Application

▹ Working in pairs of groups, two groups read their scripts to each other. The listening group tells the readers the answers to these questions:

- Was the script clear and easy to follow?
- What would you like to hear more about?
- How could the script be made better?

## Alternate Strategies

The teacher may find this series of lessons on the Hindu Naming Ceremony is a good preface to the students' studying the great Hindu epic, *Ramayana*.

## What are the Important Aspects of the Hindu Name Giving Ceremony?

### Worksheet 3: The Hindu Naming Ceremony (Namakarna)

*(Adapted from **The Living Arts of India**, Teacher's Manual, pp. 127-128. Kate Rinzler Smithsonian Institution & UN Children's Fund pp. 59-63)*

For thousands of years, Hindus have held a special ceremony to bestow a name upon a newborn child. We can follow the procedure that Hindu Indian people use in this ceremony.

The name giving ceremony will be held on a date that an astrologer has determined is auspicious. The baby may be ten, twelve, fifteen or forty days old, and this may be the first day the father has seen the baby, since in some families the mother and baby are kept in seclusion for a week or two after the birth.

### Characters

Main - Baby, Mother, Father, Priest, Grandmother, Father's elder sister, Women Guests
Other - Uncles, Aunts, Sisters, Brothers, Grandfather, Relatives, Friends, Neighbors

### Materials Needed

- Sacred Fire (represented by a square space, large enough for two or three people to sit abreast on any side. In the center is a platform with some red paper.)
- Large Baby Doll
- Fire offerings (flower petals, a little rice, a dish of water, a little ghee (clarified butter) represented by yellow paper.)
- Cradle (metal or cardboard box padded with blankets. In India, the cradle hangs from the ceiling by a rope or sheet; if this is not possible, it should be placed off of the floor on a low table or stool.)
- A plateful of unhusked (brown) rice and a gold coin placed under the cradle
- Gifts for the baby
- Food for the feast following the ceremony
- A small dish of honey

### Sequence of Events in the Name Giving Ceremony

*Indicates parts to be written and later spoken by a student. (Students must write the speeches.)*

1. Priest: Priest arranges and pretends to light the sacred fire

2. Mother and Father: Mother and father enter, mother carrying the baby. They sit together by the fire mother holding baby. Friends sit in the background.

3. Priest: Priest makes ritual offerings to the sacred fire. He/she tosses in a little rice, a little water, some flower petals and a little ghee. As priest makes offerings, he/she chants a prayer (*Student portraying priest writes this prayer).

4. Father and Priest: Father repeats after Priest certain words which say he is accepting this child and that he vows to raise it well. (*The student who is portraying the father writes these words.)

5. Priest: Priest explains the meaning of the name given.* Priests bestows his blessings on the family* (The student who portrays the priest writes words for both of these.)

6. Father: Father takes the baby on his lap, facing the fire. He whispers the selected name into the baby's ear three times.* The parents are proud and so are the grandparents (The student who portray's the father should select a Hindu name for the baby.)

7. Grandmother and Women Guests: The grandmother takes the baby and passes it under and around the cradle five times. With each round, she starts to put in the cradle but then takes it out to ward off evil spirits. [*The student who portrays the grandmother should write out a description of her actions in the first person. Example: I am the grandmother, I take the baby and ... because ... (The student will say this while performing the action)]. While grandmother performs her part, women guests sing a lullaby. (see #8)

8. Women Guest: While the grandmother does the above, the women guests sing a lullaby. ***(Worksheet 4: Lullabies)***

9. Mother: Mother puts a black dot on the baby's forehead to ward off the evil eye. She places the baby gently in the cradle and smooths down the clothes and blankets inside. She dips her finger in honey and holds it up to the child's mouth to signify a sweet happy life. (*The student portraying the mother must write out a description of each of the mother's action and its meaning, in the first person. Example: I am the mother. I put a dot now on my baby's forehead because ... The student will say the words while performing each action.)

10. Women Guests: Women Guest sing lullabies (*The student who portrays Women Guests should write one or more lullabies modeled after the Tamil Lullaby in Handout #4)

11. Guest and Volunteer Audience Members: Guest all admire the baby, praise the name and leave gifts for the baby.

12. Feast: At the close of all presentations, there is a lavish feast for all.

## What are the Important Aspects of the Hindu Name Giving Ceremony?

### Worksheet 4: Girls and Boys Names and Their Meanings

*(Adapted from* ***The Living Arts of India****, Teacher's Manual, Kate Rinzler. Smithsonian Institution & UN Children's Fund pp.5.2(2b) p.125-126)*

GIRLS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pallavi (Pal'-la-vee) | Young leaves | पल्लवी |
| Kiran (Ki-run) | Ray of sunshine | किरण |
| Chandini (Chaan'-de-nee) | Moonlight | चाँदनी |
| Shabnam (Shub-num) | Dew | शबनम |
| Prabha (Pra-bhaa) | Early morning | प्रभा |
| Nisha (Nee-sha) | Night | निशा |
| Kokila (Ko-kil-a) | Cuckoo bird | कोकिला |
| Gulbadan (Gul'-ba-dun) | Rose-like * | گلاب دان |
| Nayantara (Nay-an-tara) | Star of the eye | नयनतारा |
| Anjali (Un'-jul-i) | An offering | अँजली |
| Chanchal (Chun'-chul) | Vivacious | चँचल |
| Kalpana (Kul'-pun-a) | Thought, imagination | कल्पना |
| Asha (Aa'-shaa) | Desire, hope | आशा |
| Radha (Raa'-dhaa) | Beloved of Lord Krishna | राधा |
| Jaya (Ja-yaa) | Goddess Durga | जया |
| Sandhya (Sun'-dhya) | Evening | सँध्या |
| Manjri (Mun-ja-ree) | A cluster of flowers | मँजरी |
| Sita (See'ta) | Wife of Lord Rama | सीता |

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## BOYS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Aakaash (Aa-kaash) | Sky | आकाश |
| Deepak (Dee-puck) | Lamp | दीपक |
| Virendra (Veer-in-dra) | Victorious | वीरेन्द्र |
| Dhruv (Dhr-uv) | Lord Vishnu | ध्रुव |
| Jogendra (Jo-ghen-dra) | Lord Shiva | जोगेन्द्र |
| Aditya (A-dith-ya) | Son of Aditi, Lord of the Sun | आदित्य |
| Gopal (Go-paal) | Lord Krishna | गोपाल |
| Prem (Pr-aim) | Love, kindness | प्रेम |
| Prakash (Pra-kaash) | Light | प्रकाश |
| Vishal (Ve-shaal) | Proud, grand | विशाल |
| Ajay (A-jay) | Invincible | अजय |
| Narayan (Naar-aa-yun) | Lord Krishna | नारायण |
| Roopak (Roo-puk) | Handsome | रूपक |
| Vinay (Vin'-ay) | Well-mannered, cultured | विनय |
| Chandan (Chun-dun) | Sandalwood | चन्दन |

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## What are the Important Aspects of the Hindu Name Giving Ceremony?

## Worksheet 5: Lullabies

### Lullaby #1: Traditional Tamil Lullaby

*(Adapted from **The Living Arts of India**, Teacher's Manual, Kate Rinzler. Smithsonian Institution & UN Children's Fund p.115)*

Sung by women guests:

Little body, beautiful as the green hills.
Mouth of coral, lotus eyes,
Oh Krishna undying,
The savior of this blessing!
I want nothing beyond this,
And your blessing!

### Lullaby #2: Traditional Hindu Song for Naming Rituals

*(Collected and translated by Susan Wadley)*

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
May he grow to be wise,
And give pleasure to all.

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
May he benefit others,
And care little for himself.

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.
May he be a good judge,
And bring righteousness to the world.

Good fortune, good fortune to the mother,
Who gave birth to such a handsome son.

### Lullaby #3: Students will write their own lullaby

## UNIT 14, LESSON 4

**Focus Question: How Does the Hindu Naming Ceremony Reflect Hindu Values?**

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- understand the significance of birth rituals in Hindu life and in their own.
- compare and contrast ritual customs surrounding the birth and naming of a child in Western culture with ritual customs for this same rite in Indian Hindu culture.
- enact their interpretation of a Hindu Name Giving Ceremony.

### Teacher Background

*(Adapted from "The Role of Myth in the Indian Life Cycle," in* ***Aditi, The Living Arts of India****, Smithsonian Institute Press, Washington, DC 1985 p. 185-6 and 197)*

*The Naming Ritual can be a doorway through which students enter into a deeper understanding of Hindu values. Hindu values are perhaps most clearly seen in the numerous Hindu life cycle rituals and in myths and folktales which reflect this cyclic view of life.*

*In the west we sometimes define myth as Plato did, as a story which is "not true," in contrast with history or science, which is seen as "true." Hindus believe that myth is a story that explains how our inner and outer world operates and how it came into being. For example, in Hindu thought a myth about marriage is not a "made up story about marriage," but a story about the marriage of the gods which reveals to us what human marriage is really about. The Indian vocabulary has no word for myth. Instead scholars use the words* ***diviya-katha*** *or divine story and* ***pura-katha*** *or ancient tale interchangeably. In Hindu thought, myth and reality are considered such identical twins; it is impossible to tell them apart.*

*The* ***Ramayana*** *is one of the most important and popular Hindu stories. After doing the name giving ceremony with students, it would very appropriate for them to read part of or a condensed version of the* ***Ramayana****. Students can view appropriate episodes from the TV version as well. The name giving ceremony should have provided a good introduction to the many otherwise strange sounding Hindu names in the Ramayana. By then, too, students should have a better understanding of the importance of religious ritual in Hindu life. Rama in the* ***Ramayana*** *(story of Rama) is an incarnation of the God Vishnu, and Hindus believe that their gods are close to them - that they are present on earth in incarnations or in disguised forms. In contrast with most Western religions conception of god as distant and transcendent, the gods of Hinduism are immanent and approachable. Hindus frequently address their gods and even name their children for them. In their devotional prayer ceremonies (puja), they feed their gods (who are represented in the form of metal or stone images) with offerings of fresh fruit. They pour water, flower petals and ghee on them, while uttering devotional prayers. Afterwards, they distribute the leftovers from a puja to devotees as* prasada*, or blessed food, just as food is blessed on some churches before Christmas or Easter.*

*Among the numerous Hindu gods and goddesses, the most powerful and important gods are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Brahma is viewed as the universal soul or absolute from whence all souls emanate, Vishnu is the preserver or maintainer of life and Shiva is the destroyer of evil. We have the Christian correspondence of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost, which also relates to the Buddhist (esoteric) vision of Will, Love and Intelligent Activity and Spirit, Soul and Matter:*

*Hindu children, as they grow up in India, are prime witness of Hindu mythology. In contrast to the Western view that folktales and superheroes are for children, Hindu children and adults together participate in rituals of life and in listening to the telling of tales about the gods. Mothers bring their children with them when they go to temples to hear the stories of the gods told by the temple priests. Plays about Rama ("Ram-lilas") are other "lilas" are still celebrated, even in highly urbanized settings. Hindu children maybe the key to the preservation of the world of myth in India.*

**Springboard**

▸ Students work with a partner to do the following:

✔List three important life rituals (ceremonial events) besides birth which are celebrated with loved ones.

- Why and how are these rituals celebrated in your culture?

**Procedure**

▸ Each group performs its script. At the close of all presentations, treats are passed around. *(The teacher informs students that while Hindu boys and girls have the same name giving ceremony, boy babies are given larger feasts than girls - but distributes treats equally to students.)*

**Summary/Application**

✎ Students write in their journals, their responses to the following questions in double entry form, writing their answers on the "Notes" side of their journal, and leaving the "Response" side blank (to be filled in for Homework):

- How do Hindu's choose names for their children?
- In your opinion, what is the most significant characteristic of the Hindu name giving ceremony?
- What things in the Hindu Naming Ceremony are common to religious birth/naming ceremonies in other cultures?
- What things are different?

## UNIT 15, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How does the Teacher (Guru) Help to Shape and Mold the Values of his Students/Disciples?

### Major Ideas

- The *Ramayana*, an ancient Indian epic, describes several instances of disciples, especially Rama and Laksmana, interacting with their guru Vasishtha. As a result of these experiences, the two boys were able to establish a special relationship with their teacher.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- examine and understand the significant value and contribution of the teacher/disciple (guru/chela) relationship in Indian society, using illustrations from *Ramayana*.
- define and discuss the concept of the teacher in Indian culture as distinct from the student's culture.
- compare and contrast the guru in Indian culture to the teacher in American culture.

### Teacher Background

*Ancient Indian society was characterized by extended families. Many families had a spiritual perceptor/guru who was regarded and treated as part of the family and accorded a high degree of respect. The role of the guru was pivotal. He was expected not only to impart worldly knowledge but also spiritual values and discipline to family members.*

*The guru was also often intimately involved in family affairs. He played an active role in family discussions and his input and/or advice was considered essential for important family decisions. If he was asked to make a decision, it was considered binding for both family elders and children. It is noteworthy that in Indian society today, the role of the guru is still that of a spiritual teacher, although the term is increasingly being used for all types of teachers.*

*The term guru comes from "gu," the root word meaning darkness and "ru," from the root word meaning light. Hence, the word "guru" means a teacher who removes the darkness from one's mind and replaces it with light. Stated differently, the guru is an individual who can guide a disciple from the darkness of ignorance to the light of understanding.*

*In the case of Brahmin (upper caste) families, the guru in India is often chosen by an individual either for himself or his son. In such families, there is an initiation or thread ceremony called the diksha. Initiation ceremonies may take many forms: a touch, or more often, the receipt of a mantra, the secret word or prayer which supposedly possess special power.*

*Such acts mark the beginning of a special relationship for which both the guru and the chela must be prepared. The student, in particular, must be receptive to new forms of knowledge. The relationship between the two is usually very personal, even sacred. Once initiated, the disciple is expected to obey the wishes and instructions of the guru and to respect and honor him or her at all times. It is not unusual for the disciple to have more than one guru and to regard the teacher as a person endowed with special qualities, almost a god.*

*In the Ramayana, there are several instances of teachers and their disciples working together in order to achieve common goals. In the lesson, the students will examine material related to this issue.*

**Springboard**

- What are the qualities of a good guru?
- What are the qualities of a good chela?
- Teacher will list responses on chalkboard.

| Guru | Chela |
|---|---|
| Knowledgeable, wise, articulate, sets a good example, able to establish discipline in students, humane, possesses integrity, respectful, patient, perceptive, self-control | Attentive, respectful, responsible, willingness to learn, dedicated, cooperative, obedient, steadfast |

**Procedure**

If we look carefully at the qualities of the good teacher and the qualities of the good student, how do they work together to help the guru/chela relationship teach values?

▸ Teacher will distribute **Worksheet A: The Kingdom of Kosala.**

- What kind of relationship did Rama and Lakshman have with their guru?
- Do you have anyone you have anyone with whom you have that kind of relationship?
- Have you ever had that kind of relationship with any of your teachers? Explain.

▸ Teacher will distribute **Worksheet B: The Bow of Mahadeva.**

- What is significant about this event?
- In what way did Rama honor his teacher/guru?

▸ Teacher will distribute **Worksheet C: The Demoness Tataka**.

- Pretend you are Rama in the forest and your guru asks you to destroy the demon tataka. What is the symbolic meaning of this act? Would you do it?

We have looked at three examples of Rama interacting with his teacher in a guru-chela relationship.

- Which of these incidents would you feel is appropriate for a teacher and the student?
- Which would you feel is inappropriate?

In each case, explain your reasons.

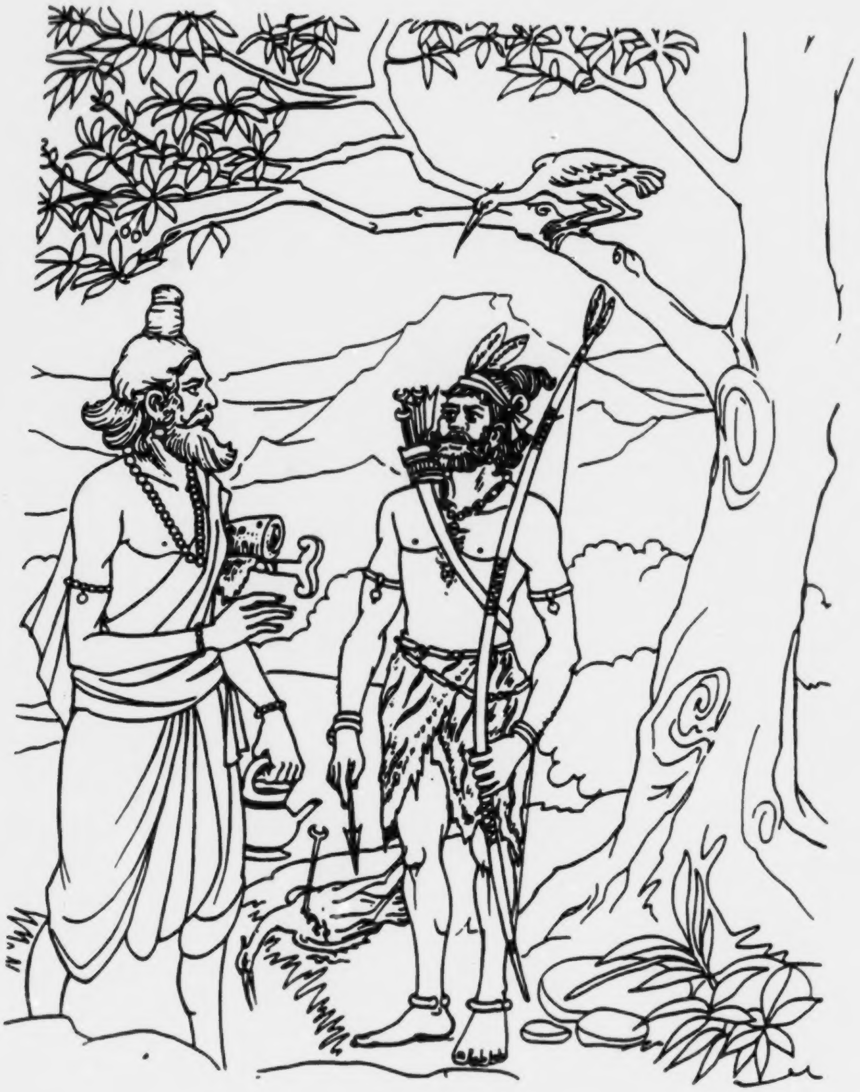
## Summary/Application

Many people say that today the teacher/student relationship is changing. Students often do not respect and honor their teachers. The importance of the teacher's role in their lives is not recognized. Teachers often do not have the highest aspirations for their students.

- What can the *Ramayana* teach us about the guru/chela relationship?
- Do you think these attitudes would work in the West at the end of the 20th c.?

▸ Students will complete the following writing exercise:

- To me, the Indian teacher/guru is like my American teacher in that.....
- Some ways my American teacher differs from Indian teachers are......



## How Does the Teacher (Guru) Help to Shape and mold the values of his students/disciples?

### Worksheet 1: Guru-Chela Relationships in the Ramayana: The Kingdom of Kosala

*(Adapted from Pai, Anant (ed.)* ***The Ramayana****, Bombay: India Book House Pvt. Ltd. 1987)*

Kosala was a prosperous kingdom in ancient India ruled by the King Dasharatha. It was situated on the bank of the river Sarayu and its capital was called Ayodhya.

Dasharatha had four sons born of three queens: Kausalya's son was named Rama, Kaikeyi's son was named Bharata, while Sumitra, the last queen, had twin sons, Laksmana and Shatrughna. All four sons grew to be very intelligent young men. The brothers were emotionally close to each other and their mothers. Their teacher was the sage, Vasishtra, who taught them the sacred lore, the customs of the culture and the traditions.

Society was divided into four large divisions depending on birth and character: Brahmins (teachers), Kshatriya (warriors), Vaishya (businessmen or merchants) and Sudras (laborers). King Dasharatha was from a Kshatriya which meant that it was the duty of his sons to be warriors. Under the influence of Vasishtha, the princes became versed in the art of fighting. They were proficient in riding elephants and horses and in driving chariots. All four of them were excellent archers. In addition, they learned the holy scriptures and were devoted to the welfare of others. They were of pleasant disposition, humble, soft-spoken, respectful of elders and very fond of their father and their guru, Vaisishtha.

The sage had a close relationship with the princes. Like King Dasharatha, he was also very proud of them. He declared to the King, " Your four sons, O king, are the Veda themselves," meaning that they had mastered their lessons and absorbed much knowledge. As they grew into manhood, about age 16, he taught them both spiritual and worldly education according to the culture and tradition. "Be obedient and respectful to your elders," he cautioned them. "Be protective of dharma, righteous duty." They in turn revered him greatly and rendered personal services to him.

**Directions**: Complete the following questions.

- How do the young men interact with their guru?
- What specific instructions did Vasishtha give his brothers?

## How Does the Teacher (Guru) Help to Shape and Mold the Values of His Students/Disciples?

### Worksheet 2: Guru-Chela Relationships in the Ramayana
### The Bow of Mahadeva (Shiva)

*(Adapted from Kishore, B.R.,* ***Lord Rama****, Novato, CA: Nataraj Publishing, 1993)*

The *Ramayana* describes a city called Mithila, where a certain king Janaka was the ruler. A contest was to be staged there for the hand of the most beautiful princess, Sita. The King had invited guests from all parts of the country.

The sage Vishvamitra took Rama and Lakshman and other sages to Mithila in order to participate in the contest. On the way, the sages told Rama about the god Shiva's famous bow which was in the possession of King Janaka. This special bow was given to King Janaka by Lord Shiva.

After welcoming everyone on the first day, Janaka announced that if anyone present at the assembly was successful in bending and stringing the bow, he was offering the hand of his daughter, the princess Sita, in marriage. He declared, "The man who will be married to Sita will be a man of great strength and righteousness. To prove his strength, this man will have to lift and string the ancient bow of Shiva. No man has shown the strength to lift the bow." The bow was so heavy it took many strong men even to move the eight-wheeled box in which it was kept.

Several of the guests, mostly warriors, kings and princes from other cities, tried and failed to string the great bow of Shiva. Applying only physical powers, most could not even move it. Then it was Rama's turn. In keeping with the attitude of respect and reverence for one's guru, Rama approached the task only after receiving the approval and blessing of his guru Vishwamitra. Everyone, including several princes who had tried to lift the bow, watched as Rama approached the weapon. He looked at Shiva's bow. First he touched it. It was beautiful. Then with no effort whatsoever, he hoisted the bow from its casing and started to string it. As he strung it, the bow snapped in two and fell to the palace floor with a tremendous sound that shook the earth. First there was disbelief. Then everyone stood and chanted, "Rama, Rama, Rama!" In achieving this feat, Rama had used both physical and spiritual powers, which in part had been bestowed upon him by his guru.

**Directions:** Complete the following questions.

- Why was Rama's guru so important to this event? Do you haveanyonee equally important in your life?

## Worksheet 3: Guru-Chela Relationships in the Ramayana
## The Destruction of the Demon Tataka

*(Venkatesananda, Swami, **The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki**, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988, P.66)*

When Rama was around sixteen years of age, the Sage Vishwamitra came to the kingdom of Ayodhya to make a request of King Dasharatha, Rama's father. The sage wanted the help of Rama in order to protect an important sacred rite which was being interrupted by demons.

"I shall go, too, father," declared Lakshman. The king did not protest. Rama and his brother Lakshman, weapons slung over their shoulders, followed their guru along the banks of the river Sarayu.

The journey was a long one. Whenever the three stopped to rest, the sage took time to teach the boys how to use the powerful weapons of the gods to fight the demons. They journeyed until they reached the foot of a frightening forest.

The forest was named after Tataka, a demoness who lived there alone with her two fierce and wicked sons. Tataka was dark, deep and dense. The demoness and her sons were terrorizing all the people in the neighborhood.

Rama and Lakshmana followed Vishwamitra into the forest. Rama clutched his bow and removed arrows from his quiver. They heard many strange and frightening sounds. Each step they took brought them deeper into the forest.

After blessing Rama and Lakshmana, Vishvamitra asked Rama to challenge and defeat Tataka who was devastating and ravaging the land. Rama bowed his head in obedience to the wishes and commands of his guru Vishwamitra.

He raised his bow and twanged it, making the distant areas echo with its fearful sounds. Aroused and provoked, Tataka rushed headlong at Rama and Lakshmana in a blind rage. She rained stones and boulders at the princes. But they were equal to her advances, especially Rama. She was struck down by a volley of arrows. Vishwamitra was greatly pleased by both Rama's attitude and his bravery in protecting his subjects from harm. The gods in heaven rained lotus blossoms on Rama, blessing him. The three continued on their journey deeper into the forest, eventually heading for the kingdom of Mithila.

### Discussion Questions

- How did Vishwamitra help Rama?
- Could Rama have destroyed Tanaka without his guru?
- Is there anyone in your life who is so important to you? Why? Why not?

## UNIT 16, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How Can We Compare and Contrast the Celebration of Puberty in India and the U.S.?

### Major Ideas

- Male Brahmins perform the Upanayana ceremony to gain spiritual purity to be socially and spiritually acceptable.
- Girls in South India have a rite of passage when they begin menstruation.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- recognize the role of puberty in their own and South Asian culture.
- recognize the differences between northern and southern India.
- demonstrate the concept of caste at puberty.

### Teacher Background

*In India, for some groups, puberty is acknowledged. What is perhaps most important is that this varies: the puberty of males of some groups and the females of some groups is NOT acknowledged, but for others it is. Hence this lesson has a twofold purpose: to raise the issue of maturation, and rituals of maturation, with students and to guide students toward an understanding of the social differentiation made by the presence or absence of puberty rituals.*

*For females, puberty rituals exist in the southern portions of India, but not in the north or east. A number of factors contribute to this difference, including kinship patterns, agricultural practices, valuation of women, and Brahmanical standards that demand male heirs. The strongest correlation, however, is with sex ratios. Please note the sex ratio map included in the lesson: females are more likely to survive in the south than they are in the north. Scholars have shown that this survival rate is primarily dependent on the care and nurturing of girl children, that is, in the north more girl children (under 5 years of age) die than boy children. In the south, girls survive at rates almost equal to those of boys. This map corresponds strongly to the pattern of the presence or absence of puberty rites. Hence the valuation of females, as manifested in rituals honoring their sexuality and fertility, corresponds to the regions where they are less likely to die as small children. You and your students might want to explore this issue further, using lessons in* **A South Asia Curriculum: Teaching About India**, *produced by the American Forum. You might also tie this issue to lessons about female goddesses and the valuation of women's power in South Asia.*

*Rituals for males occur throughout India. Here the difference is a class one: upper caste males (those whose varna is Brahman, Vaishya or Kshatriya) have a sacred thread ceremony while lower caste males (those whose varna is considered shudra or untouchable) do not. The sacred thread gives the male "twice born" status, that is, he is now reborn in a higher state of ritual purity. No females are twice-born. The lower castes are thought to be so low by birth that they can never attain the spiritual and moral qualities of the twice-born. In modern India, this ceremony is most often performed for Brahmin boys, and hence affects a very small percentage of the population. However, as lower castes seek to raise their status, they sometimes begin to perform this ceremony, thereby claiming "twice-born" status. So as a marker of traditional values re social status, especially in rural India, the sacred thread ceremony is still important, although it may not be held at puberty, but rather at the time of a young man's marriage. Rituals are very expensive and often involve feasting friends and relatives, so for boys these two events are usually condensed into one* *ceremony. One hundred years ago, however, the sacred thread ceremony would have taken place in a male's youth, some years prior to actually sexual maturation.*

### Springboard

Throughout the world there are rituals/rites that teenagers perform as part of their passage to adulthood.

- What are some of the rituals of American teen-agers?
- What privileges do the rituals give?
- What responsibilities come with them?

### Procedure

▸ Students will divide into small groups to discuss the springboard questions. Distribute **Worksheet 1: Male Puberty Rites** and **Worksheet 2: Female Puberty Rites**.

Compare the rituals of boys and girls.

- What differences are there?
- What rituals do we have in our society to mark the transition to adulthood?
- Which situation better describes American reactions to a girl's puberty?
- Which would you personally prefer?

▸ Students will complete the reading and then watch section 5b of video.

- How do boys' and girls' rituals differ?
- Who is not permitted to perform these rituals? Who does it give greater status to?

You should ask students to compare the puberty rituals to American rituals.

- What rituals do other religions have around the time of puberty?
- What "rituals" showing maturity do we celebrate in other ways? (Driver's liscense, sweet sixteen parties)
- Why is it important for physical maturation to be acknowledged?

Distribute **Worksheet 3: Indian Sex Ratios Map**.

- How does this help you understand the distribution of the female puberty ceremony?
- What other differences between north and south India might you expect?

### Summary

Students will return to their groups. Some groups will enact some of the Indian puberty rituals. Other groups will enact some of the American teen-agers puberty rituals.

Class will discuss both "rites of passage" to understand how they are inductions into the culture of the nation.

## How Can We Compare and Contrast the Celebration of Puberty in India and the U.S.?

### Worksheet 1: Male Puberty Rites

In India, the two greatest events in a male Brahmin's life are the receiving of the sacred thread and marriage.

The sacred thread (Upanayana) ceremony celebrates puberty. Originally this ceremony was performed during the eighth year for Brahmins, the eleventh year for Kshatriyas and the twelfth year for Vaisyas. Today usually only Brahmins perform it. It's actually put off until just before marriage. The actual day of the ceremony is carefully selected. It can only begin on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Invitations are sent out ten to twelve days before. Once they are sent, preparations for the ceremony begin.

The preparations begin with worship of Ganesh, the elephant-headed god who removes obstacles. The night before the ceremony, the boy's body is covered with a purifying yellow paste of tumeric. His father's sister gives him a special piece of yellow cloth and a silver ring is fixed to the top knot of his hair. He then spends the whole night in silence.

In the morning he is taken to an altar with a sacred fire. His head is shaved and he is bathed. The boy then shares a meal with his mother. This celebrates the last time the boy and his mother will eat together. After the feast, he is decked with jewels and seated by the sacred fire. He is then presented with two pieces of yellow cloth, one to wear and the other to be used at a later time. He is also given a symbolic cord made of grass to wear around his hips. His guru then invests him with the sacred thread.

Everything about the thread is symbolic. The threads, made of ordinary cotton, must be threefold. They represent reality, passion and darkness. The threads are tied together by a three-part knot representing Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The young man must always wear the sacred thread. During auspicious ceremonies, it hangs from the left shoulder. During inauspicious rites, it is hung from the right shoulder. The sacred thread is followed by the gift of a small piece of deer skin hung around the boy's wooden staff. The boy and his guru now sit and recite verses, perform ceremonies and finish the ritual that his made him a full Brahmin.

Once a Brahmin male receives the sacred thread and is spiritually purified (Twice-born), he is entitled to the six privileges of a Brahmin. They are studying the Vedas, teaching them, performing sacrifices for his own benefit, performing them for the benefit of others, receiving alms and also giving them. The receiving of the sacred thread also makes a Brahmin male eligible for marriage.

Upon the successful completion of these rites, there are certain rules that a Brahmin is expected to observe. He should not play an instrument or sing, but should listen to religious songs. He should make every attempt not to be absent from home at night. He should never look down into deep water, such as a well or a big river, nor look at his own reflection in water. He should not climb a tree to get fruit or walk along a road at night. He must not leap from high places or jump over deep pits. He should not speak unworthily and avoid all temptation by keeping away from persons of low caste and from women. He should avoid luxury, never make fun of women, and never spit toward the sun. At night she should always be sure he has a light when he eats so he doesn't injure any living thing in the dark. If the light goes out, a Brahmin must stop eating, for in the dark food is no longer fit to eat. It is only good for ghosts. He must always tell the truth and can only sleep and take food in the men's part of the house. These rules are designed to help the Brahmin maintain the spiritual purity attained by receiving the sacred thread.

Since this is considered so important, a man who fails to undergo the ceremony would be considered a social outcast and spiritual misfit.

230

## How Can We Compare and Contrast the Celebration of Puberty in India and the U.S.?

### Worksheet 2: Female Puberty Rites

In southern India and in the Hindu regions of Sri Lanka, a girl's first menstruation is celebrated as it marks her attainment of womanhood and her fertility. If a girl is not fertile, she is unable to bear children and her lineage may die out. So this ritual is important because it recognizes the importance of women to the survival of the human race.

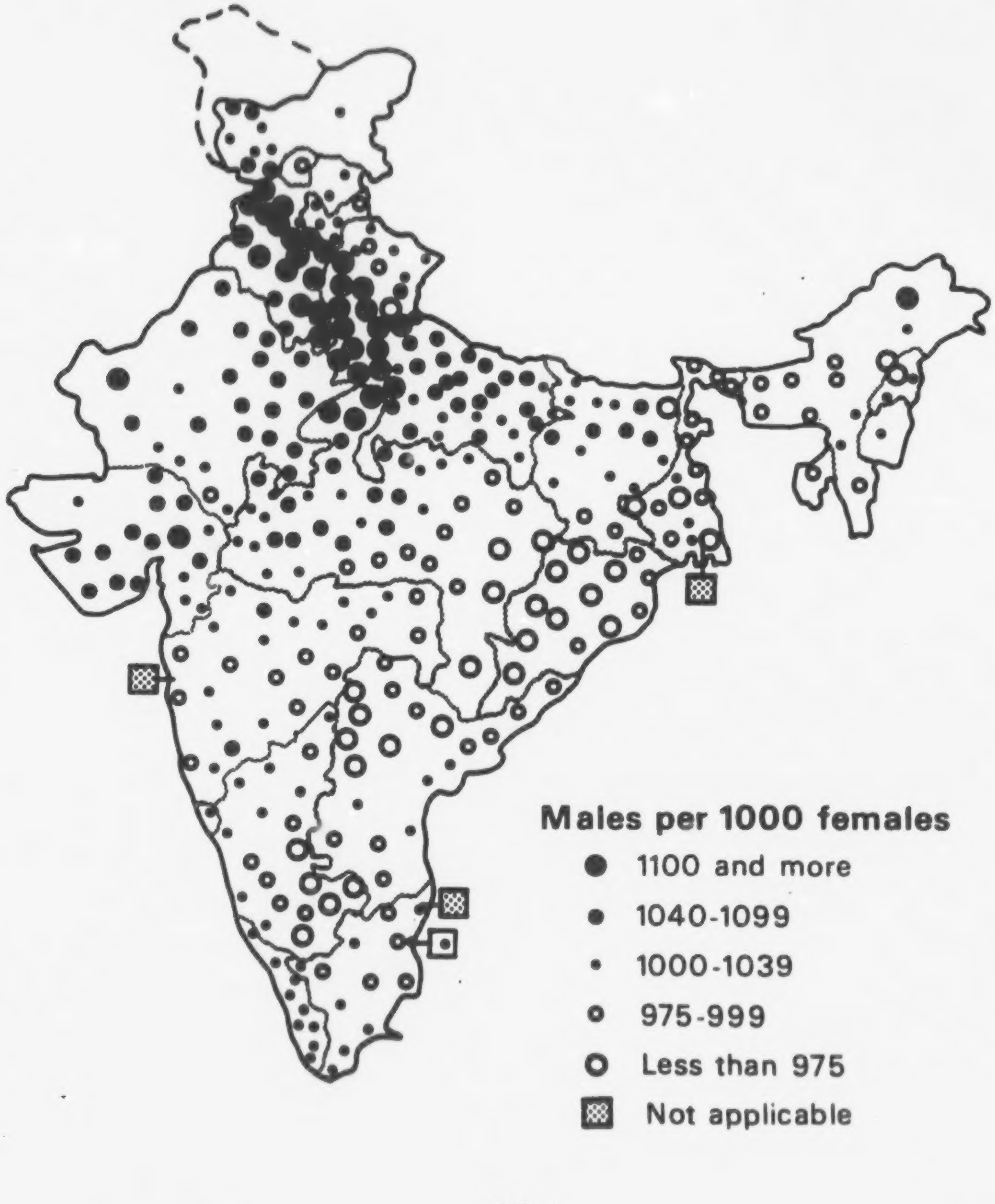
When the girl has her first period, she is secluded for three days. On the fourth day, her relatives celebrate her new status. First, she is dressed in a new sari. She may never have worn a sari before, because wearing a sari is a mark of womanhood. She probably had worn only dresses or a long skirt and blouse. Then her mother and her aunts give her a ritual bath in a specially prepared space in her family's yard. They pour pots of water over her to cleanse her of the impurities of menstruation itself. A Brahmin priest supervises the ritual bath and the rituals that follow. After her bath and after she puts on a dry sari, the priest performs rituals which further acknowledge her new status. Then she in honored as if she were a goddess before she enters her house. In her house, she greets her family's friends and relatives, sitting with a younger female relative on this her most important day. The family may have a band play or other entertainment for their neighbors and friends, as well as a feast. But from now on, the girl's movements will be more restricted because her new status also brings with it new dangers.

In north India, girls do not celebrate their puberty. Rather the first signs of menstruation are a cause of fear and dismay in girls who often have no preparation for this event. Most commonly, a girl will tell her brother's wife about her "bleeding". This somewhat older female relative then tells her what to do, but aside from restricting the girl from going outside or touching or cooking food (because she will pollute it), nothing is done to mark this important life change.

## How Can we Compare and Contrast the Celebration of Puberty in India and the U.S.?

### Worksheet 3: Indian Sex Ratios

*(Map courtesy the Cartography Department, Syracuse University)*


Males per 1000 females
● 1100 and more
• 1040-1099
· 1000-1039
○ 975-999
O Less than 975
▨ Not applicable

## UNIT 17, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How Do Wedding Ceremonies and Rituals Play an Important Role in Understanding Indian Culture?

### Major Ideas

- The *Ramayana* depicts the wedding rituals followed by the north Indian Hindu communities in ancient times. Certain wedding rituals remain the same all over India, although there are many variations over time, region, caste and class groupings.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- list the various rituals and ceremonies of an Indian wedding.
- compare and contrast a Judeo-Christian wedding to a Hindu Indian wedding.
- evaluate the importance of wedding rituals in understanding Indian culture.

### Teacher Background

*In India, marriages are typically arranged by the parents of prospective couples. "Dating" in the contemporary U.S. sense is not favored by the elders. Usually, the couple's parents choose the life partner and the couple is asked for their approval. These types of marriages are called "arranged" marriages. Increasingly, in urban areas of India, young boys and girls do mix and mingle and get to know each other, and "love" marriages where the choice is made by the couple are becoming more common.*

*Both the bride and groom must be prepared for the marriage. Widespread among Hindus is the belief that a wife becomes the "half-body" of her husband, linked to him physically, socially, morally. Marriage, for a girl, is a second birth, for in the patrilineal communities of India, she is known by her husband's name, joins his clan, and lives with his family. Marital preparations symbolize this new state by transforming the appearance, primarily of the bride, but also of the groom. This is done through ritual baths, changing of the clothes, and bodily adornment. (**The Living Arts of India**, Kate Rinzler, Smithsonian, p.2)*

*Attired magnificently and wearing ritual crowns, the bride and groom may be seated on symbolic thrones to be viewed, and, in a sense, worshiped. For they, as a pair to be joined, represent and encapsulate the creative activity which spawned the universe. This wedding response of the traditional Hindu marriage dates from the Atharva Veda of the Vedic period in Indian history.*

> *I am the man, you the woman.*
> *I am the chant, you the word.*
> *I am the sky, you the earth.*
> *Come, let us be together.*
> *From us let children spring.*

*Wedding ceremonies in India last from a day to three days. Although the variations in wedding ceremonies are many depending on region, caste and class, certain rituals are recognizable throughout India. The following rituals are observed during most Hindu wedding ceremonies:*

(1) *Beautification of the bride - often through application of* Mehndi *(henna);*
(2) Ganesh Puja *(worship of Lord Ganesh);*
(3) Pithi *(applying Tumeric to beautify the bride's hands and feet);*

(4) Barat *(bridegroom's procession);*
(5) *Welcoming the groom's party to the bride's residential canopy or* mandap;
(6) *Wedding ceremony to be performed by the priest with* agni *or fire as the witness;*
(7) *Joining the hands;*
(8) *Seven circumambulations of the sacred fire;*
(9) Kanyadan *(Giving away the daughter);*
(10) *Wedding songs teasing the groom by the bride's sisters and friends;*
(11) Ashirvad *(Blessings form the elders of both the families);*
(12) Kanya Viday *(Bride leaving her natal home to go to the groom's house).*

*The Mithila wedding piece is about how one Hindu wedding in one caste group - the relatively high caste Kayastras - in a middle class family in a North Indian village is performed. Though some of the stages of the wedding and the symbolism may be similar to that in other parts of India there are vast differences, as there are in the U.S., depending on a families' wealth, caste, and location (North/South, rural/urban).*

### Springboard

Teacher will discuss with students the advantages and disadvantages of the way a mate is chosen in Western and Indian cultures.

### Procedure

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 1: Vocabulary Activity.** Students will review words and their meanings and use them in conduction with the activity.

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 2: A Mithila Wedding**. Teacher will read selection aloud with class, responding to the various stages in arranging a marriage. (Point out the geographical location of Mithila on the map of India. It is in the Gangetic Plains, at the foothills of the Himalayas.)

- How did these marriage preparations and ceremony differ from those in the West?
- How are they similar?
- Why are families so important during weddings?
- Discuss the role of the father-of-the-bride in Western traditions and in the Indian case study?
- What do these hierarchies say about the system of male dominance (patriarchy) in both societies?

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 3: A Wedding Song.**

- What purposes do the wedding songs serve?

▸ We have looked at the many interesting characteristics of an Indian wedding. Working in groups of three or four, discuss the similarities and differences in the wedding ceremonies of Judeo-Christian and Indian cultures in each of these areas:

- Choosing a mate
- Ceremonies **Before, During and After** the wedding

The epic text **Ramayana** talks of the wedding of Rama and Sita.

- How is Ram/Sita's wedding different from the wedding in contemporary Mithila?

### Summary

A wedding is a happy as well as a sad occasion and every culture tries to make it a memorable day for the parties involved. Even though the ceremonies may differ, the basic emotions displayed at the time of the wedding are universal. [Show Wedding section of the video *Spotlight on Ramayana*.]

- How do these brides feel about their marriage? Their wedding?
- What are the attitudes of the family toward the bride's marital decision?

### Homework

Select any of the topics below for an essay:

- Pretend you are a mother or father trying to find a prospective husband for your daughter. Write *either* a dialogue between yourself and the prospective in-laws *or* a journal about the major concerns you have for your daughter.

- You are the prospective female candidate being interviewed by the prospective in-law's family. What are your thoughts?

- As the prospective male candidate interviewing the female candidate, list five concerns about your prospective mate.

- You are an Indian teenager brought up in America. What are your thoughts as you go to India to find a bride/groom from India?

▹ Students will share their answers and teacher will post responses.

### Alternative Strategies

▹ Distribute **Worksheet 4: Ram Chander's Story**. Using the format of the television show "Let's Make a Deal," create a list of gifts and/or dowry that the bride's and groom's families will give to each other. Using the format of the television show "A Dating Game," a male student will interview three female students for marriage.

▹ Distribute **Worksheet 5: Classified**. Students will write or respond to the matrimonial advertisements in *India Abroad*.

✎ Have students write out matrimonial ads for (I) partners for themselves (ii) themselves. Or find "personals" from the local newspaper.

- Have them discuss, in groups, similarities and differences in the ads from their writings, the ads in the local newspaper and those from *India Abroad*.

## How Do Wedding Ceremonies and Rituals Play an Important Role in Understanding Indian Culture?

### Worksheet 2: Vocabulary Activity

### Definitions

| | |
|---|---|
| **Agni** | fire, sacred fire used in Vedic ritual; god of fire |
| **Baraat** | the bridegroom's party at an Indian wedding |
| **Biradari** | community, clan |
| **Kacchi ghori** | play-horse wedding dance of Rajastan |
| **Kumkum** | a red powder used by married Hindu women to dot the forehead and line the parting of the hair. |
| **Mandap** | canopied platform decorated with flowers where a Hindu religious wedding is performed. |
| **Mantras** | a set or words repeated aloud or silently and used by Hindus and Buddhists to invoke a state of meditation or at prayer ceremonies |
| **Mehndi** (henna) | a paste made with henna leaves used to stain the hands and feet in intricate lace-like patterns. |
| **Pandit** | Hindu priest |
| **Panjakar** | Village Matchmaker |
| **Ramayana** | Hindu religious epic |
| **Tikka dot** | on the forehead - applied at a prayer ceremony and on other ceremonial occasions as a form of blessing |
| **Vedic** | deriving from the Vedas; sacred Sanskrit texts |
| **Pithi** | tumeric rubbing |
| **Paan** | betel leaf filled with various aromatic nuts eaten as a last course to a meal. |

### Exercise

Use the appropriate Indian word from the list above to complete the reading.

Priti and Prakash met at a high school dance and liked each other. Priti's parents contacted Prakash's parents through a ________________ who talked to the __________ of Prakash. Both parents were happy with the prospects of a union and set a wedding date.

On the day of the wedding, Priti came to the ____________________ all decorated with____________________ designs on her hands and feet and ____________ on her forehead. The ________________ chanted ________________ verses at the wedding and performed the ________________ rites with the ______________________________ as a witness.

Everyone wished the bride and groom a prosperous and auspicious life together. The groom's party carried the bride to her new home. Once in the house, Priti and Prakash bowed down to Rama and Sita, the major characters in ______________. Rama and Sita were the family's god and goddess and the newly married couple asked for their blessing.

## Worksheet 2: A Mithila Wedding

*(Reprinted from Aditi: The Living Arts of India, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 4.1(2a), by Neelam Kapur and Abbie Zeffren, pp.7-13.)*

Ganga Devi, a Mithila painter, belongs to the Kayastha caste, traditionally of scribes. She lives in Bihar, the region famed as the birthplace of Sita, who as the wife of the god-king Rama, became the symbol of a woman's fidelity to her husband.

When Ganga turned sixteen years old, all the adults in her family began looking for a suitable husband for her. It was one of her elder brothers who, after a few months of investigation, suggested Om Prakash as a prospective groom. He was twenty-three years old, worked at a post office and had excellent prospects for promotion. Preliminary inquiries indicated that his family met all the requirements for a desirable match. Ganga's parents decided to approach Om Prakash's parents to discuss marriage between their two children. They made advances to the other family indirectly, through mutual friends: Ganga's brother had a friend who knew Om Prakash's uncle. Through this chain of contacts, the girl's family sent word that they would be interested in considering a marriage alliance.

Ganga knew Om Prakash's family was conducting a preliminary investigation of her own family. Then Ganga's parents received a letter informing them that Om Prakash's father, elder brother, and uncles would bring the boy for a visit in about a week. Such a visit would enable the men in the groom's family to check on the girl's health, beauty, and her ability to conduct herself properly in front of guests. The two young people could meet, briefly and publicly, to see how they might feel about each other. If the boy's family or the boy himself did not approve of the match, they would depart after giving the girl a box of sweets. If they did approve, they would give her not only a box of sweets, but also a sari, indicating they wanted to conduct serious negotiations for the dowry leading to an engagement.

When the day arrived for the visit from Om Prakash's relatives, Ganga was dressed in an elaborate, colorful sari and lots of jewelry borrowed from her mother. Ganga's father stepped out and escorted his daughter in to the room. She walked in slowly, her head bent modestly, carrying a tray of sweets she had prepared. Om Prakash's father asked her some simple questions: her name, whether she could read and write, what household chores she could perform, what crafts she knew, and so on. Throughout this interrogation, Ganga did not look up even once - to do so would be immodest. She spoke properly in a soft voice and made no proud claims to proficiency at anything. It was her father and brothers who interjected with praises of her talents, her affectionate nature, and her willingness to work hard.

Om Prakash's father said she could leave now, and presented her with both the sweets and the sari. As she joined the women in the back room, the excitement was intense, though they had to stifle any sounds of joy. Ganga was almost engaged to be married.

It remained to negotiate the dowry. Ganga's father said he could not spend more than five thousand rupees to cover everything: a cash payment, the wedding expenses and gifts to the groom's relatives; this, after all, was on top of a generous dowry of household items that Ganga's parents had been saving for her all her life - saris, kitchen utensils, brass and copper vessels, jewelry, and the like. But Om Prakash's father insisted on five thousand rupees cash plus a watch, a bicycle, and a transistor radio, in addition to the other items. They negotiated back and forth in the next few days and finally reached a settlement: Ganga's family would pay four thousand rupees in cash and would also provide the watch and the bicycle. It meant that Ganga's father would have to borrow money from the village money-lender at exorbitant interest rates, but feeling certain this was the right match for his daughter, he reluctantly agreed to the terms.

Now Ganga's father consulted a Brahman astrologer, to determine when to conduct the official engagement ceremony. After checking the movements of the stars and planets against the horoscopes of the prospective bride and groom, the astrologer found the next auspicious day, and fixed it for their engagement.

Now that the engagement was official, Ganga's father consulted the astrologer again to see what would be the best date for the marriage rituals. The wedding date was written on a piece of paper that had been smeared with turmeric, a yellow powder, and accompanied with other symbols of freshness and fertility: a special tender grass and some unhusked rice. The paper was tied with some money by a special rope, dyed red. Om Prakash's family received the message and indicated their acceptance of the final plans for the wedding by placing the note near the family deity. The sent back with the bearer their note of acceptance, accompanied by the same symbolic items.

### Preparations and Rites of Marriage

From that day, preparations began in both houses for the wedding. The family deities were invoked to give their blessings to the couple...Ganga's house was cleaned and decorated. Then they decorated the threshold of the house with the traditional *rangoli* designs of flowers and other figures drawn in rice powder. In the center of the courtyard, the men built a covered platform where the actual wedding vows would be spoken. The nuptial chamber, the room where the bride and groom would be alone together for the first time, was also painted with special figures, images of protective deities and fertility symbols.

The bride and groom were receiving special decorations also. For five days after the official announcement of the engagement, five married women helped Ganga apply a special turmeric paste to her face and limbs, massaging it in for beauty and good fortune. Meanwhile, in his own home, Om Prakash's relatives were massaging the same turmeric paste into his skin.

There were a number of ceremonies with unhusked rice. The rice symbolized fertility; it will bear offspring, which will nourish the family, but it can only do that when transplanted. Ganga, too, would be transplanted, leaving her natal home to go her husband's home to live, bear offspring and live her life.

The day of the wedding arrived at last. Both bride and groom had to fast all day to propitiate the Gods. At sunrise Om Prakash arose, bathed, and dressed in a red *dhoti* (a cloth wrapped around the hips). Seated on a rickshaw, accompanied by a band of musicians, he went around to the homes of his relatives and sought their blessings. Ganga did the same in her village.

When the groom's wedding party reached Ganga's village, they waited near the community center. Ganga's brother and other relatives went to the center to welcome the guests. The two groups exchanged hugs, easing the way for strangers to become relatives overnight.

Now it was time for the wedding couple to be dressed in their official garb. Om Prakashh changed out of his own red dhoti and into the clothes given to him by Ganga's parents - a red dhoti, a red shirt, a jacket, and a shoulder wrap. He also wore a crown made of pith, strong and lightweight...Ganga, in her own home, was bathed while seated in the yoke of a plow, another fertility symbol. Then she was dressed in a red sari and blouse which her parents gave her. Ganga's mother placed a red fan made of bamboo on Ganga's head, symbolic of a crown.

Together the young couple entered the nuptial chamber. They were both so embarrassed and shy that they did not once look at each other: Ganga never looked up at all. They went to the four corners of the room. At each corner they stopped and Om Prakash placed a five rupee coin on the red fan, to ward off any evil spirits. Then the groom went to the platform to wait for his bride.

Now Ganga changed again into the beautiful red sari presented to her by Om Prakash's family. Ganga was led out to the platform. The sacred fire in a square bamboo structure was lit, as the priest recited mantras (prayers) and the genealogies of both families. Then the couple exchanged wedding vows. It had been an exhausting day, but there was still much more to do; nothing about the time of marriage is ordinary, and no one is permitted merely to relax and resume ordinary activities. Ganga, whose face had been veiled throughout the day, moved the veil so that all of her groom's relatives could see her face for the first time. The maternal uncle of Om Prakash covered Ganga's head with another beautiful sari, and Om Prakash removed it; they did this five times.

### Rites for the Newlyweds

Ganga had now been bestowed upon Om Prakash as his wife, in accordance with Vedic injunctions and witnessed by relatives, friends, and the basic elements of fire, earth, water, and air. The groom's party was invited into the house for a grand meal, but the new couple could not eat yet. First they each had to change clothes again, in their separate quarters; she, accompanied by her mother and sisters, and he, accompanied by his father and brothers. They waited till the main feast was over, then they were escorted into the nuptial chamber, as all the guests tossed uncooked rice at them. By this time it was perhaps three or four in the morning, and they ate for the first time in more than a day - some sweets and some *puris* (a puffed fried bread.) They would eat nothing with salt on this day, for their life together must be sweet and substantial, with no suggestion of tears.

They were given about five minutes alone in the nuptial chamber, in case they wished to talk a little. The elders and close relatives soon returned. Ganga left the nuptial chamber, along with her family and guests. The groom spent the night there alone. The next morning the two spent a few moments alone before Ganga was escorted to the prayer room to perform for the first time the *Gauri Puja*. This is a worship ceremony conducted by married women in which they ask Gauri, wife of Lord Shiva, to bring health and prosperity to their husbands. Ganga would perform this *puja* every morning before touching any food for at least the next five years.

The two of them were still not permitted any time alone, however, and for the next four days and nights they were subject to specific restrictions: Om Prakash was not permitted to wander outside the house, when walking together, Ganga walked in front of Om Prakash, Ganga's brother made Om Prakash run around the *mandap* five times each day. The bride was not allowed to bathe, but merely to wipe her face with a cloth every morning. After she did so, more *ghee* and *kumkum* were added to the parting of her hair. Each night Om Prakash stayed alone in the nuptial chamber.

On the morning of the fourth day after the wedding rites, the groom and the bride were each bathed in turn in water that had been kept in the nuptial chamber. They were then carried to the pond in separate palanquins. On the way, Ganga felt happier than she had ever been before. Her parents made the right match, she and Om Prakash would raise a good family together. At the lake they left the pith crown that Om Prakash wore in the wedding ceremony, symbolizing the role of husband was assumed.

When they returned, Om Prakash performed a *puja* on the *mandap* completing the wedding ceremonies. That night Om Prakash gave Ganga a gold ornament as a gift, and they saw each other alone for the first time.

Om Prakash remained at Ganga's house for fifteen days; they stayed until Om Prakash's father urged them home. About twenty men came from Om Prakash's family, bringing a palanquin for the bride. They were warmly welcomed and well fed before saying farewell and taking the bride, full of tears yet smiling radiantly, with them to her new home.

It was not easy for Ganga to leave her parents' home - now she would be able to visit only on special occasions, not as often as she might like. But the rituals of the past few weeks had helped her make the transition from an unmarried daughter to a wife, a dutiful daughter-in-law, and a prospective mother.

## Worksheet 3: A Wedding Songs

Wedding songs can be simple and repetitive songs which make basic statements about the facts of kinship and family life in the Indian village. The phrase, "Little bird will fly away," applies to all village daughters who, literally from their births, are viewed as birds of passage, destined to leave their nests where they were born and raised, to live in their husbands' households.

Indeed, the complex, elaborate and time-consuming rituals of marriage are thought to transform women physically into full members of their husband's families. The marriage of a daughter is an event of great joy and significance. It is a meritorious act on the part of the girl's family to give their daughter, along with many other precious things, into a good family. Nevertheless, marriage is also a parting, a severing between loved ones.

The first song portrays the bride's male relatives aligned against the females. The women wish to postpone the moment of parting, while the men wish to proceed with the wedding business. Notice that members of both the mother's and the father's families are mentioned, for both play roles in the wedding and in supplying the girl's marriage gifts. Curiously enough, however, the mother and the father of the bride are not included.

The bride's grandfather prepares the dowry
The grandmother forbids him
The bride's grandfather prepares the dowry
The grandmother forbids him

Don't forbid me, woman of the house
Little birds will fly away
Don't forbid me, woman of the house
Little birds will fly away

The bride's father's brother prepares the dowry
The father's brother's wife forbids him
The bride's father's brother prepares the dowry
The father's brother's wife forbids him

Don't forbid me, woman of the house
Little birds will fly away
Don't forbid me, woman of the house
Little birds will fly away

The bride's brother prepares the dowry
The brother's wife forbids him

The bride's brother prepares the dowry
The brother's wife forbids him

Don't forbid me, woman of the house
Little birds will fly away
Don't forbid me, woman of the house
Little birds will fly away

**Women's Wedding Song**

Ram has come into my orchard,
With how many thousands of elephants and horses?
And how many thousands of kinsmen?

Ram has come into my orchard,
Oh, King Dasharatha, how many thousands of kings have come?
And how many thousands of people?

Ram has come into my orchard,
Ten thousand elephants and horses have come
And twenty thousand relatives.

Ram has come into my orchard,
What should I offer for the elephants and horses?
And what for the kinsmen?

Ram has come into my orchard,
What can I give to please King Dasharatha,
And what to my son-in-law?

Ram has come into my orchard,
I'll give green grass to the elephants and horses,
And a feast to the kinsmen.

Ram has come into my orchard,
I should give much wealth to please King Dasharatha.
And I'll give my darling daughter to my son-in-law,
Ram has come into my orchard.

**Exercise**

- How does the wedding song refer to *Ramayana*? In the song, who is Ram?
- According to the song, what is the responsibility of the father of the bride? How does he respond to that responsibility?

## How Do Wedding Ceremonies and Rituals Play an Important Role in Understanding Indian Culture?

### Worksheet 4: Ram Chander's Story

*(Adapted from* ***No Full Stops in India****, Mark Tully, New Delhi: Penguin India, 1991, pp.14-56.)*

*This selection is excerpted from a longer piece telling the story of an untouchable, Ram Chander, who left his village to work for Mark Tully in the city. However, Ram Chander's family remained in the village and Ram Chander supported them and visited often. When his daughter came of marriageable age, Ram Chander felt it was his responsibility to provide his daughter with a wonderful wedding and dowry. The selection below deals with Mark Tully's introduction to the wedding preparation as well as the father-of-the-bride's attitude toward his daughter's marriage.*

[I asked Ram Chander if he needed money for his daughter's wedding.]

"No, I have money saved in a drawer in the house."

"In this house," I said angrily. "You know we have had three burglaries."

"It's locked in the drawer downstairs. The burglar only steals from the office upstairs," replied Chander with perfect logic.

"Why on earth don't you use a bank? It'll be much safer, and you may get interest."

"No, I don't trust banks. You may have to pay a bribe to get the money out. Many people have told me that."

Bribes are usually only paid to get loans but I gave up and asked whether Rani's (his daughter) fiancé was literate. We had told Chander a hundred times to make sure he married Rani to a well-educated boy who could get a good job. But Chander hadn't bothered to find out what his future son-in-law's educational achievements were. They turned out to be minimal. Chander insisted it would be all right, because he knew the family well, but it wasn't until after the marriage that he learnt that the boy's father had two wives and innumerable children.

Chander's biradari had not yet been corrupted by the middle-class practice of giving dowries, and so he was not presented with a long list of goods which he would have to provide in order to get his daughter married. Nevertheless, Chander himself drew up a fairly formidable list of gifts to give the couple. It was quite naturally a question of self-respect for Chander to show that he was able to provide for his daughter properly. This was Chander's list:

31 *degchis* (handle less saucepans) and other cooking pans,
31 *saris* for the women and seven *kurta* pajamas for the men of the boy's family,
5 saris and silver ornaments for Rani,
1 scooter, 1 television set, 1 tin trunk, 1 wall clock, 1 wristwatch for the boy, 2 chairs,
1 table, 1 sofa, 1 bed with bedding, and 2,500 rupees cash.

Total value: 80,000 rupees

...It never, for instance, occurred to me that Chander would provide a scooter for his son-in-law, because I had never seen any of Chander's relatives riding one. As the day of the wedding drew near, the extent of Chander's commitments became clear as the back room of our house started to fill up with all the gifts.

## How Do Wedding Ceremonies and Rituals Play an Important Role in Understanding Indian Culture?

**Worksheet 5: Classified Ads**
*("India Abroad," June 24, 1994, pp.57-58. Reprinted with permission.)*

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# CLASSIFIED

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| MATRIMONIAL FEMALE | MATRIMONIAL MALE |
|---|---|
| Correspondence invited from sincere, cultured, Sikh or Punjabi professionals, for beautiful, slim, fair, caring, well-educated, 30/5'4" girl with strong family values and varied cultural interests. Photo please. | Alliance for handsome Physician US citizen, caring warm, sincere, fitness conscious, Hindu Reddy 39; from very pretty, slim, sweet natured girl with Indian values under 35. Caste, province no bar. Photographs, biodata must. 9500 Kilgore Road, Orlando, FL 32836. |
| MATRIMONIAL FEMALE | MATRIMONIAL MALE |
| US settled Mathur parents invite correspondence for beautiful, accomplished, US born, employed M.A. graduate daughter, 24; preferably vegetarian/teetotaller. | I: Divorced professional, going on 34, speaks Malayalam/Tamil moderately, career oriented but periodically takes time off for visiting relatives/friends (both westernized & traditional); travel, cultural events & cooking. Eclectic literary/musical interests (primarily western) but I'm otherwise very much Indian.<br>YOU: 27-34, caring, sociable, from South Indian family that appreciates learning, not out of touch with India. |

# Life Cycle Rituals: Death and Funeral Rites

## UNIT 18, LESSON 1

**Focus Question: Funeral Rituals: How is the Indian concept of death illustrated in the Ramayana?**

### Major Ideas

- In India, death is treated as a transition and part of reincarnation.
- Consigning the body to the waters of the Ganges is considered a purification ritual that will guarantee a place in *moksha*; or salvation.
- The deaths of Dasaratha and the return of Ram to his home in the heavens represent instances in *Ramayana* where issues of death rituals are explored.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- define and discuss the concept of reincarnation.
- examine and understand the funeral rituals as exemplified in the Ramayana.
- differentiate the ritualistic differences among cultures
- empathize with the universal connotations of loss and sadness experienced by every culture of the world.

### Vocabulary

Use this list for discussion of the significance and importance of the terms.

*parmatma* - Supreme soul
*atma* - individual soul
*moksha* - liberation
*reincarnation* - to be reborn in another body
*River Ganges* - the sacred river to Hindus
*Banaras* (Kashi) - Holy City for Hindus
*Bhagvagita* - Hindu religious book
*manikarmika ghat* - Most sacred official cremation site for the Hindus
*Yama* - The Hindu God of Death; the god who keeps accounts of your actions in this life and tallies them to decide your next birth.
*Shiva* - God; the destroyer of evil
*Tirtha* - A holy place
*Linga* - Symbol of Shiva used for ritual worship

### Teacher Background

*A more appropriate name for Hinduism is* sanatana dharma *which means "the eternal way". Hindus believe in the theory of reincarnation and* moksha, *the liberation of the soul from the body. They believe that based upon their karma, or destiny, they will receive their new birth and bodies on this earth. They believe in the transmigration or rebirth or reincarnation into different bodies.*

*The soul is considered to be eternal and it is not rewarded or punished immediately after dying. There is an interim period during which the god of death, Yama and his assistant Chitragupta tally up your good* *and bad deeds and then determine your place in heaven. This becomes the journey of the disembodied soul to the moon, which is the door of heaven.*

*Shiva is the third person of the Hindu Triad. Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the preserver, and Shiva is the destroyer of evil. He is a re-creator, hence the name Shiva, or "Happy One". Whenever Shiva acts to destroy evil he does a* Tandaar *dance and open his third eye in the middle of his forehead.*

*The Ganges River comes from the hair of Shiva. Bhagirath was the last of several generations of men who worshiped Shiva and earned the promise that he would send the "River of Life". Ganges descended to earth. Shiva promised the river that he would absorb the shock of the fall on his head. As a result, the river Ganges comes from coils of hair on Shiva's head. The Ganges River represents life, since water is the symbol of birth and life. One of the banks of the Ganges, which is called '* Manikarnika *is considered auspicious because a person who dies there receives liberation* (moksha) *from the cycle of birth and death.*

*One of the holy places mentioned in the poem on Worksheet 3 is* Kashi, *or* Banaras. *It is located on the river Ganges.*

***The Bhagvagita** is the section of the epic **Mahabharata** where Krishna instructs Arjuna on the meaning of life. It is one of the most important Hindu religious writings.*

*Note: Two poems in **Worksheet 3** also refer to the taped interview on audiocassette about the funeral ceremonies in India as told by a Hindu. The teacher can also have the class view the video of the death scene in the movie **Far Pavilions**, the death scene of King Dasaratha in the TV version of **Ramayana**, and/or the scene depicting the death and cremation of Gandhi in Richard Attenborough's film epic **Gandhi**.*

*Note: Marc Chagall's, **The Birthday**, beautifully illustrates the concept of moksha.*

### Springboard

▸ Teacher will develop a semantic map with the word DEATH. Some key words the teacher may elicit include: flowers, wake, guilt, grief, wearing black/white, purification, reincarnation, family, funeral.

▸ Discuss questions:

- Which words are part of Western culture?
- Which words are part of Eastern culture?
- Which words are common to both?

### Procedure

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 1: Glossary of Indian Words**. Class will discuss the meanings and importance of these words in Indian culture.

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 2: The Death of King Dasaratha**.

▹ Students will work in groups to explore the following questions:

- How does Bharata perform the funeral rites for his father in the palace?
- How does Rama console Bharata when they meet in the forest?

▹ Teacher will debrief the discussion by listing on the board the different attitudes toward death revealed by Ram and Bharata.

- How does **Bhagavagita** reinforce the metaphor of the concept of death as *atma* changing its body just as a person changes clothes.
- How do you react to this?
- Do you have a comparable experience in your religion?

Death is also for the living. Many cultures develop rituals to ease the survivors through the death of a loved one. In South Asia the most auspicious (lucky) place to die is in Banaras.

▹ Distribute **Worksheet 3: The Importance of the City of Benaras** (Kashi). Students will read the first poem and complete the exercise. Show students sections of the video on Benaras. Students will read and discuss the final two pieces in Worksheet 3.

[*If possible, teacher will show the video of the death scene in the movie* ***Far Pavilions*** *and the death scene of King Dasartha from the TV version of* ***Ramayana*** *along with the audiocasette commentary explaining funeral ceremonies in India as told by a Hindu. The teacher should also show the slides of Banaras.*]

▹ Students will divide into four or five groups to answer the following topics:

- Hindu concepts of death and reincarnation.
- Judeo-Christian rites for the deceased.
- Hindu rites for the deceased.

### Summary/Application

Death is a universally experienced phenomena, but the ceremonies and rites surrounding it differ in every culture. Discuss:

- Is it not amazing that in every culture the basic emotions of sadness, loss and guilt are identical?

Ask students who feel comfortable to describe their experience and thoughts at a funeral. If someone has never attended one, they are free to use knowledge gained from the experiences of others, readings and movies to imagine how they might feel.

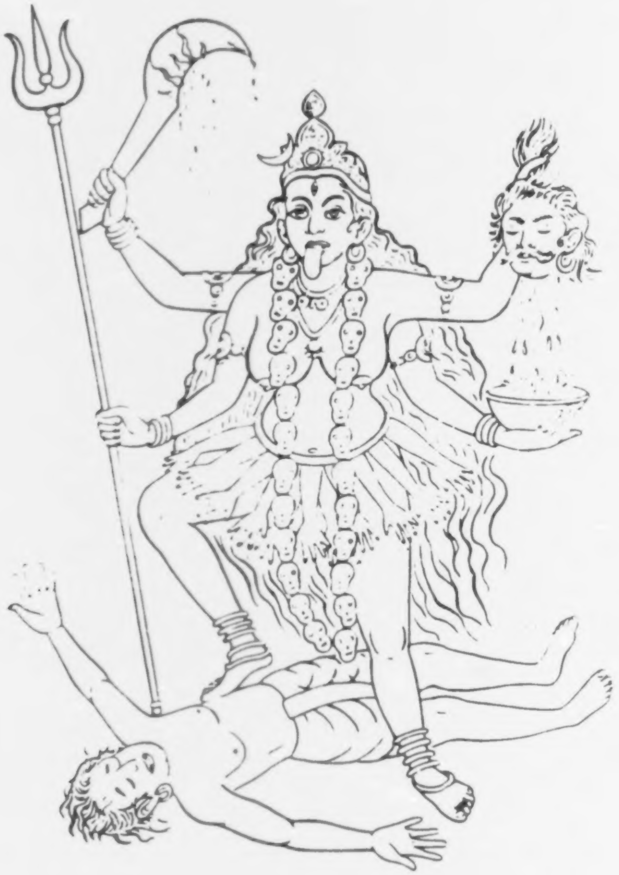
▹ Discuss how the Hindu philosophy of death makes it possible for them to deal with loss and contrast and compare this to the Western experience.

▸ Students will interview a person from another culture and write about their funeral rites. Complete the following statements and questions in your learning log:

- Today in class, I learned ....
- I learned the following facts ....
- I do not understand ....
- I want to know ....
- When I think of death, I ....
- How do I react to death? ....
- How would a Hindu react to death? ....

**Supplementary Reading**

- Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth, *On Death and Dying*.



KALI

## Funeral Rituals: How is the Indian concept of death illustrated in the Ramayana?

## Worksheet 1: Death Ritual of the King

### Reading 1: The Funeral in the Palace

*(Swami Venkatesananda, The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki, p. 94-95.)*

Characters
*Dasaratha, King of Ayodhya*
*King's youngest wife: Kaikeyi*
*King's sons: Bharata and Shatrughana*
*Vasistha: The palace sage*

The next morning, the sage Vasistha said to Bharata: "Enough of this grief, Bharata: let the funeral rites proceed." The king's body was taken out of the trough of oil. Bharata once again gave vent to his grief and lamented near the king's body. Vasistha once again said: "The king's funeral rites should be performed with a cool mind and without mental agitation." Thereupon the priests brought out the sacred fire which the king himself had diligently maintained in his house and with which his own funeral pyre would be kindled. When the funeral pyre was set ablaze, there were heart-rending cries by the women of the palace ...

On the eleventh day, Bharata performed the necessary purification ceremony; on the twelfth he performed the appropriate ceremony for the peace of the departed soul, at which he distributed lavish gifts to the brahmans (priests) and the poor. On the morning of the thirteenth day, once again Bharata lamented the king when he went to the cremation ground in order to collect the ashes. Weeping uncontrollably, Bharata fell down unconscious. Satrughna, too, fell down unconscious. When he regained consciousness, Satrughna wailed aloud: "The ocean of grief generated by the wicked Manthara, which took the shape of the two boons granted by my father, and which was infested with the crocodiles of Kaikeyi's greed, has swallowed us. Our beloved father used to look after us with great affection and love, and provided all our needs. Who will care for us now?" Hearing the two brothers lament like this, all the people of the palace also gave vent to their sorrow.

Seeing this, the sage Vasistha said to Bharata: "This is the thirteenth day; and the ceremonies connected with the funeral have to be done today. These three pairs of opposites (birth and death, joy and sorrow, gain and loss) are inevitable in the life of all beings: therefore, you should not behave like this." Hearing the admonition of the sage, the two princes got up and continued the rites connected with the thirteenth day of mourning."

## Reading 2: The Funeral in the Forest

*(Swami Venkatesananda, **The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki**. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988, pp.94-95)*

But, Rama replied: "The embodied being, Bharata, is not a free agent; he is driven to and fro by the end-result of his own action. However, everything in this world has destruction as its end, all exaltation has fall as its end, all meeting has separation as its end, and all living has death at the end. The clear recognition that a fruit has to fall and that a man has to die, frees one from fear. All this is natural and inevitable. One does not grieve over death any more than one grieves over the ripening and falling of a fruit! Grieve not for another, Bharata, be alert and see that life is passing whether you are sitting or moving. Unwise men do not perceive the ebbing away of life. Similarly, people do not perceive that time brings people together and separates them, even as logs of wood are brought together and separated in water. Perceiving all this clearly, one should diligently work out one's own true happiness: for such true happiness is indeed the goal of everyone.

"Our noble father who was devoted to righteousness has fulfilled his life's mission and has passed away. Mourning for him will not postpone our own death! Return to Ayodhya and do what you should to; rule the kingdom. And, I too, shall do what I should do -- live in the forest for fourteen years. This is the course of right action, 0 Bharata."

## Reading 3 Bhagvagita, Chapter 2, Verse 22

*(Zaehner, R. C. (1966). **Hindu Scriptures**, p. 256) **(To be read aloud by teacher)***

As a man casts off his worn-out clothes
And takes on other new ones [in their place],
So does the embodied soul cast off his worn-out bodies
And enters others new.

## Questions

- How does this verse illustrate the Indian concept of death?
- Why might one consider death in Hindu society the beginning of a new life?

## Funeral Rituals: How is the Indian concept of death illustrated in the Ramayana?

### Worksheet 2: Hindu Poems on Death

*(Eck, Diana (1983).* ***Benaras: City of Light****. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London.)*

### **Untitled** (KKh 35, 7-10)

Are there not many holy places on this earth?
Yet which of them would equal in the balance one speck of Kashi's dust?
Are there not many rivers running to the sea?
Yet which of them is like the River of Heaven in Kashi?
Are there not many fields of liberation on earth?
Yet not one equals the smallest part of the city never forsaken by Shiva.
The Ganges, Shiva, and Kashi:
Where this Trinity is watchful, no wonder here is found
the grace that leads on to perfect bliss.

Pleased with Vishnu, Shiva asked him to choose one boon after another. The things Vishnu successively chose were the very things that made Kashi famous. First, he asked Shiva to let Kashi be a place of liberation ... Vishnu went on to ask for related boons. He asked that this be a place where all the various kinds of worship, charity, and sacrifice yield *moksha* as their fruit. He asked that moksha be granted here freely without the difficult spiritual disciplines of the yogis and ascetics. He asked that even the lowest of creatures, such as rabbits and mosquitos, be blessed with moksha here.

### Questions

- What does the poem tell us about the city of Benaras (Kashi)?
- Look at a map. Find Banaras. Which river is the River of Heaven on earth?
- How is this river associated with death rituals?
- Who is Shiva? Why is it important that he always be in Banners?

### Manikarnika

This is Manikarnika, where death Is auspicious,
Where life is fruitful,
Where one grazes the pastures of heaven.
There is no *tirtha* [holy place] like Manikarnika,
There is no city like Kashi [Banaras],
there is no *linga* [god] like Vishveshvara [Shiva],
Not in the whole universe.

### Questions

- Why is the Manikarnika significant to Hindus
- What ritual is performed on this site?
- Why is this ritual significant?

# Chapter V

## How Does Ramayana Reflect Change Over Time and Space?

## UNIT 19, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: To What Degree has the Ramayana had influence beyond India?

### Main Idea:

- Although the *Ramayana* is one of the two seminal texts of South Asia, the tradition has been carried to Southeast Asia. Since the era of the great Hindu cultures in Java, *Ramayana* continues to be an integral part of the culture of this predominantly Islamic nation. The continuance and transformation of the *Ramayana* indicates the versatility and endurance of this great epic.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- identify the components of a *Ramayana* performance in Southeast Asia.
- analyze the "travels" of *Ramayana* and its subsequent changes.
- discuss the degree to which *Ramayana* has found a home in other cultures.

### Teacher Background

*The* ***Ramayana*** *continues to flourish as a performance in Southeast Asia today. On the island of Java in Indonesia,* ***Ramayana*** *puppets are available and often just used to decorate households. Rama becomes Ram and Sita becomes Sinta. New puppets are added which are part of the animistic tradition of the island. The same is true for Bali, which is a Hindu-believing region. It is possible to attend a* ***Ramayana*** *performance almost any night in Bali. These performances are often used by the government to develop their point of view on an issue and can have political overtones. However, the crux of the story remains the same. The arrogance of Ravana is booed and the goodness of Rama is applauded. Each puppet is very stylized and the dalang (puppeteer) is able to literally breath life into the cowhide silhouettes. The people of the region are totally familiar with the story and the exploits of Rama.*

### Springboard

- What would you define as "typically America?"
- Why did you select that?
- In reality, is it "typically American?"

### Procedure

- Distribute **Worksheet I: The "Travels" of Ramayana.**

  - Based upon the reading, how did *Ramayana* come to Southeast Asia?
  - What adaptations were made to *Ramayana* in its new setting?
  - Why do you think the epic was able to "stand-up" to the trip?

We have seen that *Ramayana* in Southeast Asia is somewhat different from *Ramayana* in South Asia.

- Distribute **Worksheet 2: The Ramayana of Southeast Asia.**

  - How would you describe a wayan kulik?
  - How does it differ from the oral tradition of *Ramayana*?

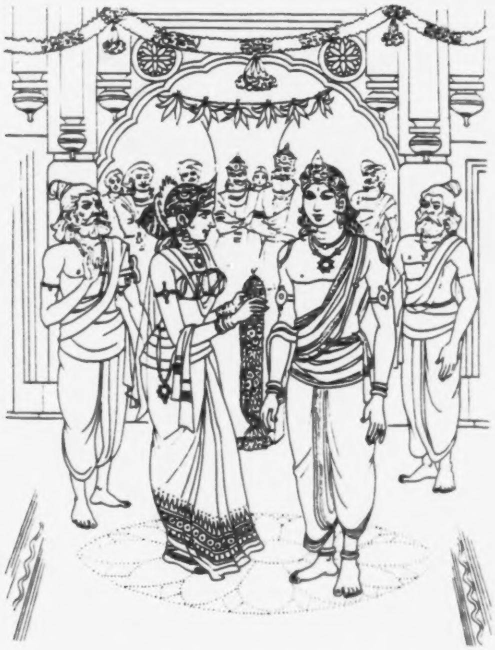
- How does it differ from Ram Lila?
- Would you like to attend one of these performances? Why? Why not?
- Based upon what you know about both India and Southeast Asia, how well has the *Ramayana* adapted to a different culture?
- How well has that culture adapted to the *Ramayana*?

**Summary/Application**

It is always great fun to make shadow puppets and perform the *Ramayana*. *Refer to shadow puppet activities in earlier lessons. Distribute materials.*

▹ Encourage students to create a *wayan kulit*. Divide the class into groups: some will make puppets, others will paint puppets, some will make the stage, some will write the script (or any script included in this guide could be used).

If possible, tailor the script to a (a) birth, (b) marriage, (c) political event, (d) business event.



## To What Degree has Ramayana had influence beyond India?

### Worksheet I: The "Travels" of The Ramayana

The *Ramayana* traveled to Southeast Asia both by ocean and overland. It moved eastward across the Indian peninsula and then southward through the narrowest part of the Malay Peninsula. As a result, there is a strong Indian influence in Myanmar (Burma), Kampuchea (Cambodia) and through Thailand and Malaysia.

However, the strongest tide of Indian thought was carried by Islamic traders, men who traveled the oceans between the Mideast and Southeast Asia. As early as 670 A.D., the northern most island of current Indonesia, Sumatra, became a center of Buddhism and an important trading post for the spread of Buddhist ideas. By the 8th century, Borobudur (the great Buddhist temple in central Java) was build and soon after a Hindu complex was developed to celebrate the trinity of Hindu gods. These temples, Prambanan, still visited by thousands of tourists annually, show the importance of Hinduism during a brief period on the island of Java.

How did Indian culture cross the water to Southeast Asia? The most probable theory is that priests, acting as court emissaries, introduced some aspects of Indian culture to courtiers and the royal families throughout the islands of Java and Bali. These priests probably brought a written text and this was rewritten by Javanese poets. What emerged in Java and Bali was a meeting and merging of Indian and local culture.

At the beginning, the other great Indian epic, *Mahabharata* was more popular than *Ramayana*. However, as the political center moved from west to east Java, and closer to Bali, *Ramayana* began to be more apparent. Many of the adaptations were written in the old Javanese language which was Sanskrit-based. However, major innovations occurred during these travels.

When *Ramayana* was performed/related in early India, it was largely a narrative tradition, although some classical Indian dance does incorporate the *Ramayana* stories. As the story moved east, its format altered. It became largely a dance/drama, with or without masks, and then a puppet performance. By the 14th c. the people of East Java were performing *Ramayana* both with and without masks. Music was added - the *gamelan* orchestra. Although the region had converted to Islam, music was acceptable. A strange new combination developed: Islam = Sufism (mystical Islam) + Hinduism + native Javanese beliefs (which were largely animistic) to equal the foundation of the Javanese way of life.

During the period of 19th century colonialism when the Dutch controlled Indonesia, other innovations were made in the cultural composition of Southeast Asia. European music was introduced and other forms of theater were introduced. However, *Ramayana* had become a "staple" and continues to be performed in Southeast Asia today.

## To What Degree has Ramayana had influence beyond India?

### Worksheet 2: The Ramayana of Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia today, *Ramayana* remains a vibrant and important cultural tradition. The story is performed in many ways but the most popular is the *wayan kulit*. These are shadow puppets cut from buffalo hide. Each character in the epic is a different puppet. The puppets are hand painted and easily recognizable.

What is a performance of *Ramayana* like in Southeast Asia today?

The most important thing to note about wayan performance is that they can take a whole night. They usually do not begin until after dark. The raised stage for the puppets and the puppeteer (dalang) is covered with a sheer cloth. Behind the cloth is a flame which provides the light for silhouetting the puppets. the dalang sits cross-legged in the center and he along operates all the puppets, sometimes as many as 30 during a performance. There will also be a gamalan orchestra and the musicians will receive their signals from the dalang. It is basically a "one-man show" with the dalang singing, operating the puppets, informing the players of when they should start and stop and timing the whole performance. This is a gigantic task. The dalang must stay awake all night long, He must know about 150 stories by memory. He must own over 200 puppets, all of whom play a part in some story. He must be a masterful story teller because in his performance he must defines the character and the speech of each of the characters. Since the dalang is so expert, he can receive up to $2500 for an all-night performance!

How does the audience react to the performance? During a wayan, the audience has a choice as to where they want to sit. They can sit in front of the stage and watch the flickering shadow puppets. Or, they can sit at the side of the stage and watch the puppeteer. Many prefer to sit at the side of the stage because they claim the oil lamp gives the performance a mystical quality.

A typical wayan performance will be three acts of three hours each! Each act follows the life cycle : Act 1 - Youth; Act 2 - Adult; Act 3 - Old age. The most dramatic part of the performance usually occurs around midnight when a massive battle takes place. Every wayan must have a battle because the battle symbolizes the conflict in every man's spirit and the power battle each of us fight within ourselves. This is a very challenging scene for the puppeteer. The puppets "fly" around the stage, the music increased in intensity and all human action becomes outsized.

Wayan is a total experience. Music, dance, drama, painting, and poetry all combine to transport the audience to another place. The performances often signify a birth, a death, a wedding, a communal feast or a government initiative. They are worldly and spiritual and a living tradition in Southeast Asia today.

## UNIT 20

# Introduction

Although we know that it is important to learn about other cultures in more insightful fashion than a study of their food, fashions and festivals, these three singularly commonplace activities are strong cultural carriers in South Asia. These lessons are an interesting and exciting approach to teaching about complex concepts in India through more simple vehicles.

"I learned the Ramayana at the lap of my mother."

How many of the rituals and customs of our heritage are absorbed in the same manner? Our first awareness that a special occasion was coming was linked to the smells coming from the kitchen rather than the date on a calendar. So, too, the festival life of India is transmitted through the smells and sounds of preparation, wrapped in delicious stories told by mothers as they work. There is no auspicious Hindu rite which does not put the married woman to work bestowing her blessing on all living and growing persons.

Married women in India receive their life-sustaining power from two primary sources. The first is within her. It is her own chastity, that is her sexual discipline idealized as exclusive devotion to a single husband/partner. Her second source is her privilege of creating a special relationship between herself and a benign goddess, with whom she becomes symbolically identified. (Hanchett,1988) This relationship is based on a vow (vrata). Through the practice of *pujas* (ritual worship) and austerities as outward signs of the *vrat*, Hindu wives are thought to have magical power to protect the lives of children and husbands.

Food in India is often used for ordering relationships and creating internal order in one's body. In the *bhakti* traditions, especially those of a region near Karimpur in the north of India, food made as offerings to the Gods marks devotion (prasad), which when consumed by humans symbolizes the god's spiritual nourishment of his devotee. Hence, food signifies relationships, especially those involving giving and taking, whether between god and devotee, landlord and tenant, mother and child, or husband and wife. Food also signifies the emotions found in those relationships. Sexual relationships and caring, in particular, are marked by food exchanges. It is not surprising, then, that food transactions also mark subordination, whether of females or the low castes or even children.

Food forms a very significant part of many rituals and myths, but in the festival context it is clear that the preparation, offering, serving, and eating are not done just because it is mealtime and people are hungry. Rather food serves to suggest a condition, a process, or any number of analogous concepts.

Deities and spirits are thought to be hungry for food. They can be bribed with food and are thought to be attracted to places where food can be found. Thus, one *jati* (group) of farmers prepares pork but only outside the kitchen since pork is considered a favorite food of malevolent ghosts.

Jati ranks in a village are manifested through eating patterns - who can take food from whom. Raw fruits and grain are the most freely exchanged. Foods fried in *ghee* (clarified butter) are more acceptable than foods cooked in water which are called *kacca* food. Leftovers, contaminated by the touch of the eater, are least acceptable. Foods, like anything touched, are affected by and transmit the level of purity of the one who touches them. The products of the cow have the power to purify and hence can reduce contamination from a person's (or object's) touch. Foods cooked in ghee are thus less easily contaminated by touch and more acceptable to a wider group of individuals. Brahmans, a highly ranked jati, will not accept food cooked in water from almost any other jati, while Sweepers, a lowly jati, accept food cooked in water from almost all jatis.

Rank and status within the household are also marked by eating: men eat before women, older women eat before younger. No communal mealtime exists in many of the smaller villages like Karimpur. A woman eats only after her husband and male elders have eaten, with a wife sometimes waiting into the night for a tardy male to return so that she may have her meal.

In Brahman families, a visiting son-in-law of higher status than his wife's family should be served only fried foods. Likewise, a new wife is fully accepted into her husband's household only with her serving a besan-bhat, a meal of a milk curry and rice, basically a kacca meal, marking that it is acceptable for her to serve his family this easily contaminated food. In some families, besan-bhat is the first meal served every time a daughter-in-law returns after a visit to her natal family, reaffirming the marriage bond and her membership in her affinal home. It is also the meal served on the annual festival called Pitcher Fourth (karva cauth), when women worship their husbands (Wadley, 1994:45).

Foods and festivals are not merely a way to satisfy hunger and sensual indulgence. As you can see, they are two of the mediums through which social, cultural, economic, political, and aesthetic messages are communicated.

## UNIT 20, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How Do Festivals and Celebrations Convey Aspects of Indian Culture?

### Major Ideas

- Throughout India various celebrations reflect both life cycle and seasonal experiences.
- Celebratory foods are linked to the harvest cycle and availability

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- define key terms such as: auspicious (inauspicious), ghee, prasad, Divali, Ram Navami, Kartik, Caitra, conch shells, kettle drum.
- identify and explain life cycle and seasonal experiences.
- compare and contrast Indian festivals to those which are inherent to their particular cultures.

### Teacher Background

*In India, various celebrations occur throughout the year. Some are primarily aligned to births of various gods. Others are commemorations of marriages, harvests, and death.*

*One important festival is Ram Navami which celebrates the birth of Rama, the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu. Rama was the ideal king of legendary India, establishing Ramraj, the rule of righteousness. He was reputed to have ruled the area now known as Uttar Pradesh from his capital in Ayodhya. His birth is of significant importance throughout India. Rama was born exactly at noon on the ninth day of the bright of the moon in the month of Chaitra (March/April).*

*To begin the festival a coconut, or an image of Rama, is arranged in a cradle in the shrine. At noon, amid great ringing of bells and blowing of conch shells, the doors of the shrine are thrown open and the priest announces the birth of Rama. All the audience sing songs in honor of the god. All attention is focused on the cradle. The noise is indescribable, with some people singing, and others beating kettle drums and gongs, or playing on pipes and cymbals. At this time, presents are made to the temple.*

*Another important festival that is celebrated in India is Divali. Divali is one of the best known and most popular Indian festivals. It celebrates the victory of good over evil. The origin of Divali is attributed by the Vaishnavas (those who worship Vishnu as the Supreme Deity) to the coronation of Rama in Ayodhya. Although recognized throughout India, it reflects the diversity of the society. The celebrations can last from one to five days. The five day festival begins on the last two days of the month of Asvin (Sept./Oct.), in the dark of the waning moon, and continues into Kartik (Oct./Nov.). Divali means a file of earthen lamps. The lighting of a lamp is an expression of joy, of welcoming, of an inauguration, of worship, and of dispelling darkness, both of ignorance and of gloom. As night sets in, myriads of small oil lamps (deepaks) are lit in every home. Prayers (Lakshmi puja) are offered to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, whose presence is a part of Divali.*

*For each festival the appropriate food must be prepared and consumed.*

### Springboard

- Place the word TIME on chalkboard. Have students develop individual semantic maps around this word. Allow two minutes for jotting down any ideas. Open discussion to the class to "brainstorm" with other students. Have students draw a map or web from the list until all their prior thoughts have been linked to TIME. Exercise should not exceed 7-10 minutes. When the students begin to work with the readings, return to the board to ad strands to the web so that it is a "work-in-progress."

**Procedure**

- What methods for telling time do we have?
- If we were without electricity, or disposable income, what would be available with which to tell time (Solar, lunar, religious, and agricultural methods)?

▸ Divide the class into groups of four students. Distribute **Worksheets 1a and 1b: Marking Time in India** to one half of the groups and **Worksheets 2a and 2b: Marking Time in India** to the other half. Give each group a roll of adding machine paper and markers and/or colored pencils.

- How many ways do Indians in the north of India tell time?
- How many ways do Indians in the south of India tell time?
- How can you depict the telling of time based upon your reading and the chart?
- What method will be used by Indian villagers to know what time of year it is?

**Summary/Application**

▸ Students will complete the following chart:

| TIME CONSIDERATIONS | FESTIVALS/CELEBRATIONS |
|---|---|
| | |

**Alternate Strategies**

Muslims in India follow a calendar which begins with the *hijra*, the creation of the Islamic community (*umma*). (See **Student Enrichment Worksheets 1 and 2**.)

Use reference books and other materials on Islam to research important festivals/celebrations of the Islam year and how the lunar calendar affects the planning and participation in these events. Share your findings with the class with a visual interpretation of the Islamic calendar and the Gregorian calendar or an oral report.

**Springboard (Day Two)**

✔ Students will list everything they have eaten in the last twenty-four hours. Considering their individual lists ask them to respond to the statement:

"If you are what you eat, who are you?"

**Procedure**

▸ Use a jigsaw grouping to create five "expert" groups. Distribute to each group a different worksheet: **Worksheet 3: Prana - "Breath of Life"; Worksheet 4: "Karma-Dharma" of Food; Worksheet 5: Commensal Structure of a Feast [Ramujan]; Worksheet 6:**

**Prasada/Prasad; Worksheet 7: Taste - "Food That Satisfies"; and Worksheet 8: Symbolism of Color.**

- What is food?
- How is understanding the meaning of food important to understanding Indian culture?
- What foods are religious/celebration foods to you (or that you know about)?
- What taboos concerning food do you practice (or know about)? i.e. washing hands before eating, milk and meat, etc.
- How does food define a culture?

▸ When the "expert" groups have finished answering the five questions for their readings and are prepared to explain their reading to a "home" group reassign the experts so that one expert per reading makes up the "home" group.

▸ Share the information you have learned about the meaning of food with your group. Ask your group for feedback by deciding what U.S. food belief/practice you feel is similar to the Indian belief/practice.

### Summary/Application

We have looked at five aspects of food in Indian culture:

1) Prana: "Breath of Life"
2) Karma-Dharma of Food
3) Prasada/Prasad
4) Taste: Food that Satisfies
5) Symbolism of Color

▸ Select **two** and for each, (1) explain its importance in Indian culture (2) compare it to a similar practice in the U.S. Students will write a short essay and share their responses with their classmates.

### Alternate Strategy

▸ **Worksheet 9: Food Chain**, is a Sanskrit poem, Food Chain, and it deals with the relationship of food to life. Prepare a presentation for the class on food in Indian literature and the messages it sends. You may wish to make a comparison with U.S. food symbolism. Use materials in the library and your language arts teacher as references.

### Springboard (Day Three)

▸ Give students three minutes to respond to the following question. Students will share their writings.

- How do you prepare for festivals/celebrations in your home?

### Procedure

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 10: "The Garland of Madurai"** excerpt:

- Are there festivals in your culture that are similar to the one described in the poem?

- What are the names of these festivals and on what are they based?
- What are the common themes in these festivals (yours and Madûrai)?
- What does this tell us about what you value in your culture?

Let's look at two festivals that are celebrated throughout India. Distribute **Worksheet 11a: Ram Navami; Worksheet 11b: Sri Rama is Born**; and **Worksheet 12: Divali.**

- What is meant by the term Ram Navami?
- What other birth celebrations do you have (or know about)?
- What is Divali? How do you (and other cultures) determine the beginning of the New Year?
- Why is the *Ramayana* important to our understanding of Indians and their descendants?

### Summary/Application

▸ Based upon the two festivals you have read about, either write a short story, a poem or a short sketch signify the importance of the festival in the life of the people. Students will share their writing with the class.

### Alternate Strategies

▸ Many religions set aside certain periods for religious celebrations and other functions. Use reference books and other library resources to compile a description of such periods for either Hinduism or Islam.

✎ Share your findings with the class in either a written or oral report.

## Worksheet 1a: Marking Time in India

The federal government adopted a uniform national calendar in 1957 as an attempt to normalize the approximately thirty different calendars in use by religious and regional groups. People continue to use their own calendars and calendrical terminology when calculating the dates of festivals and fairs. Hindu calendrical eras date from important events. The current era, *kali yuga*, is supposed to date from about 3102 B.C.E., when, according to the legend, *Krishna* passed away. The two most widely known eras are *Vikrami* and *Saka*. The Gregorian calendar, which we use, is also recognized. The Muslim calendar follows strictly lunar reckoning. Each month begins with the new moon. Because the lunar year is shorter than the solar year, the same Muslim festival will be celebrated in different seasons. This is why the date of various festivals will seem to change on the Gregorian solar calendar from year to year.

For 4 millennia, South Asia has used the knowledge of astronomers, astrologers, and priests to establish the correct time to place religious observances. The belief that astronomical events influence human life, and that **auspicious** or **inauspicious** configurations of stars, planets, sun and moon can bring either good or ill fortune plays a significant role in that planning. The intricacies of the calendar are spelled out in almanacs called *panchanga*. Each village has literate residents who can read almanacs and advise families on the scheduling of religious activities.

### South India

The Saka era, popular in the south, is the officially recognized one, and dates from 78 C.E. The Saka calendar begins the new year with chaitra/caitra (March/April). The solar new year, often a different time, is fixed at April 13th or 14th throughout India.

The lunisolar calendar (*amanta*) generally used by villagers in south India divides the year (*varsa*) into 12 lunar months of approximately 29.5 lunar days each. These months are named for lunar mansions or constellations (*naksatra*) recognized by ancient astronomers. Each month is divided into two halves (*paksa*), the first beginning with the new moon (*amavase*) and the second with the full moon (*purnima*). Two most important days of any month are new moon and full moon days. The waxing and waning periods are numbered separately. Special attributes or deities are associated with particular dates, making them good or bad times for certain rituals. *Amavase* is seen as dark and ominous and is the favored time for communion with the dead. *Purnima* is a bright and lucky time when many auspicious celebrations are held.

Each day (*tithi*) is divided into 24 hours and a seven-day week is recognized. Depending on family and jati traditions certain days of the week are seen as having particular character: Mondays the weavers give their cattle rest; Tuesdays & Fridays the Brahmans consider special to women and goddesses.

The cycle of lunar days and months is periodically adjusted to conform with the solar cycle. A lunar day, for example, may begin at any time during a solar day (*divasa*). When more than one lunar day falls on a solar day, or when there is no lunar day beginning on a solar day, lunar dates may be deleted, added or repeated.

Lunar months are also added or deleted to bring the lunar year of 354 solar days into accord with the solar year of 365 days. Every two and one half to three years an extra month (adhika "additional") is added to the calendar; deletions are made less frequently.

The year is also divided into two halves: uttarayana, the period after winter solstice when the sun appears to move northward through the skies, and daksinayana, the period after the summer solstice when the sun appears to move southward. The lengthening days in spring time are considered by some villagers as an auspicious period, while shortening days of midsummer is inauspicious. Hindus believe uttaryana is the god's day and as the sun moves northward it is guarding the gods. Daksinayana, when the days shorten, is the god's night, and the sun is believed to "guard the fathers."

The winter solstice is fixed throughout India at January 14th. It is a major holiday, marking the transition between the two phases of the year. It is time for purification and special care of homes, children, and cattle. It is not observed at the official solstice date but is timed with the passage of the sun into Capricorn (*Makara sankranti* - sankranti is the term for any time the sun passes into a new zodiac sign.)

**Directions**: Read the passage together in your group. Complete the following chart:

| TERM | MEANING | FESTIVAL |
|---|---|---|
| Vikrami | | |
| Sata | | |
| Amanta | | |
| Paksa | | |
| Amavase | | |
| Purnima | | |
| Tithi | | |
| Divasa | | |
| Uttarayana | | |
| Daksinayana | | |

- Based upon the reading and your understanding of the terms, what does this tell us about the South Indian understanding of astronomy?
- How can an understanding of these terms help us locate the festivals of Ram Navami, Divali, Tij, Pongal, Dussehra, and Durga Puja?

## How Do Festivals and Celebrations Convey Aspects of Indian Culture?

### Worksheet 1b: Marking Time in India

*(Hanchett, Suzanne. Colored Rice; Symbolic Structure in Hindu Family Festivals. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1988: 42.)*

### Chart: South India

Table 9—Alternative Calendars: Correlations of Lunar and Solar Months, 1966-1967

| | |
|---|---|
| **Hindu Lunar Months** | /Chaitra (1st mo.) /Vaisakha /Jyeshtha |
| **Hindu Solar Motnhs†** | Panguni /Chittirai (1st month)/Vaiyashi |
| **Gregorian Calendar** | /March /April /May /June |
| **Hindu Lunar Months** | /Ashadha /Adikha Sravana†† /Nija (true) Sravana |
| **Hindu Solar Months** | /Ani /Adi /Avani |
| **Geogorian Calendar** | /July /August /September |
| **Hindu Lunar Months** | /Bhadrapada /Asvija /Kartika |
| **Hindu Solar Months** | /Peratasi /Tula /Karthikai |
| **Gregorian Calendar** | /October /November /December |
| **Hindu Lunar Months** | /Margasira /Pushya /Magha /Phalguna |
| **Hindu Solar Months** | / Margali /Tai /Masi / |
| **Gregorian Calendar** | /January /February /March |

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† Only one set of names for the solar months is used here; each month has at least one other name.

†† This was an extra month, repeated twice in this year to adjust the lunar and solar calendars. Such adjustments are made every few years and can come at any point in the calendar.

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## Worksheet 2a: Marking Time in India

The federal government adopted a uniform national calendar in 1957 as an attempt to normalize the approximately thirty different calendars in use by religious and regional groups. People continue to use their own calendars and calendrical terminology when calculating the dates of festivals and fairs. Hindu calendrical eras date from important events. The current era, *kali yuga*, is supposed to date from about 3102 B.C.E., when, according to the Puranic legend, *Krishna* passed away. The two most widely known eras are *Vikrami* and *Saka*. The Gregorian calendar, which we use is also recognized. The Muslim calendar follows strictly lunar reckoning. Each month begins with the new moon. Because the lunar year is shorter than the solar year, the same Muslim festival will be celebrated in different seasons. This is why the date of various festivals will seem to change on the Gregorian solar calendar from year to year.

For 4 millennia South Asia has used the knowledge of astronomers, astrologers, and priests to establish the correct time to place religious observances. The belief that astronomical events influence human life, and that **auspicious** or **inauspicious** configurations of stars, planets, sun and moon can bring either good or ill fortune plays a significant role in that planning. The intricacies of the calendar are spelled out in almanacs called panchanga. Each village has literate residents who can read almanacs and advise families on the scheduling of religious activities.

### North India

The Vikrami era is followed in Gujarat and northern India (except Bengal) and dates from 57 B.C.E. The ancient Vikrami calendar begins the new year with the Hindu month of Kartik (October/November), recognizing Rama's coronation in Ayodhya. In Bengal, Baisakhi is celebrated as the beginning of the Hindu solar year, coinciding with the reaping of the rabi, wheat and barley harvest. Hindus believe that the Ganges descended to earth on this auspicious day. Baisakhi is also one of the major religious festivals of the Sikhs.

Rainfall, temperature, and the movement of the sun are three annual cycles important to establishing the calendar in north India. Three seasons of approximately four months each are recognized based upon the annual cycles:

- *garmi* (hot) - Phagun through Jeth (March-June) - the hot season crops of melons and cucumbers. (harvested in May & June)
- *barsat* (rainy or wet) - Asarh through Kvar (mid-June through September) - cropping season: the kharif, the rainy season crops of rice and corn (harvested in Oct & Nov)
- *jara* (cold) - Kartik through Magh (October through February) - cropping season: the rabi, the winter crops of wheat and barley (harvested in March & April)

The year is also divided into twelve equal parts using the samkranti days (marked at the entrance of the sun into each zodiacal sign). Four of these days are commonly recognized, and divide the year into four equal parts of three months. These are the sun's entry into Makara (Capricorn), the winter solstice; Mesah (Aries), the vernal equinox; Karka (Cancer), the summer solstice; and Tula (Libra), the autumnal equinox. The most important of these is Makara Samkranti, occurring about the 12th or 13th of January. Throughout India this day is marked by ritual performances and celebrations. The summer solstice is rarely recognized in ritual, but marks the beginning of an inauspicious season. The equinoxes are rarely acknowledged except by specialists.

As in south India, north India recognizes the separation of the year into two parts. *Uttarayana* is the period after winter solstice when the sun appears to move northward through the skies, and *daksinayana* is the period after the summer solstice when the sun appears to move southward. The lengthening days in spring time are considered by some villagers as an auspicious period, while the shortening days of fall are inauspicious. Hindus believe uttaryana is the god's day and as the sun moves northward it is guarding the gods. Daksinayana, when the days begin to shorten, is the god's night, and the sun is believed to "guard the fathers."

Finally, the year is divided into twelve lunar months. Each month begins on a full moon day and ends thirty days later. In order to adjust the resulting year of 360 to the solar year of 365 days, an intercalary month is added or subtracted periodically. Hence unlike the lunar Islamic calendar, the months occur at approximately the same time (by our Gregorian calendar) every year.

Time is counted in 14 day blocks, one following the full moon (14 days of bright) and one the new moon (14 days of dark). The waning and waxing periods are numbered separately. Special attributes or deities are associated with particular dates, making them good or bad times for certain rituals. *Purnima* (waning) is a bright and lucky time when many auspicious celebrations are held. *Amavase* (waxing) is seen as dark and ominous and is the favored time for communion with the dead.

**Directions**: Read the passage together in your group. Complete the following chart:

| TERM | MEANING | FESTIVAL |
|---|---|---|
| Vikrami | | |
| Sata | | |
| Kartik | | |
| Baisakhi | | |
| Makara | | |
| Mesah | | |
| Karka | | |
| Tula | | |
| Uttarayana | | |
| Daksinayana | | |

- Based upon the reading and your understanding of the terms, what does this tel us about the North Indian understanding of astronomy?
- How can an understanding of these terms help us locate the festivals of Ram Navami, Divali, Tij, Pongal, Dussehra, and Durga Puja?

267

## Worksheet 2b: Marking Time in India

*(Source: Wadley, Susan, "Chapter 4: The Annual Cycle In Song")*

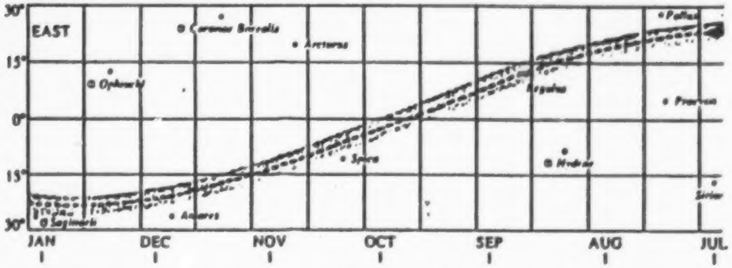
### Chart: North India

Yearly Natural Cycles in North India

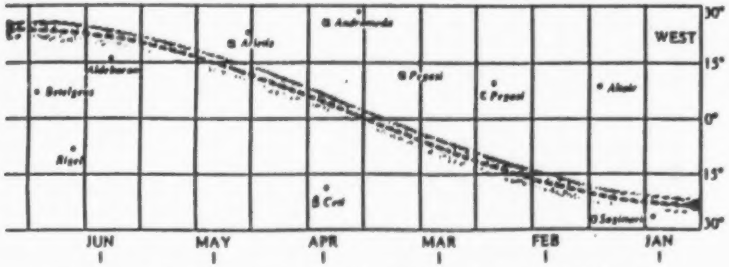
| Month | Lunar Month | Saṃkrānti Divisions | Day of Gods | Crops | Three Seasons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| March-April | Cait | Vernal Equinox | utthrāyana (auspicious) | end rabi | HOT |
| April-May | Baisakh | | | | |
| May-June | Jeth | | | hot season | |
| June-July | Asarh | Summer Solstice | | Kharif | RAINS |
| July-August | Savan | | dakṣināyana (inauspicious) | | |
| August-September | Bhadon | | | | |
| September-October | Kvar | Autumnal Equinox | | | |
| October-November | Kartik | | | | |
| November-December | Aghan | | | rabi | COLD |
| December-January | Pus | Winter Solstice (Jan. 13) | | | |
| January-February | Magh | | uttarāynan (auspicious) | | |
| February-March | Phagun | | | | |

# The Ecliptic

The sun's path across the sky—actually caused by the movement of the earth—is called the ecliptic. The ecliptic is a fixed path relative to the stars, making an unchanging map of the sky that can be used to find directions and tell time. Prominent stars and constellations are like roadsigns on this path, which also includes the twelve traditional constellations of the zodiac. The moon's path is tilted to the ecliptic by about 5 degrees, and since this tilt is itself rotating, the lunar path over time will eventually "sweep out" an area that is 5 degrees above and below the path of the sun. Since the moon is moving almost twelve times faster than the sun around this stellar track, it makes a complete circuit in less than a month, a journey that takes the sun one year to complete.



The sun always follows the same path across the sky, referred to as the ecliptic.



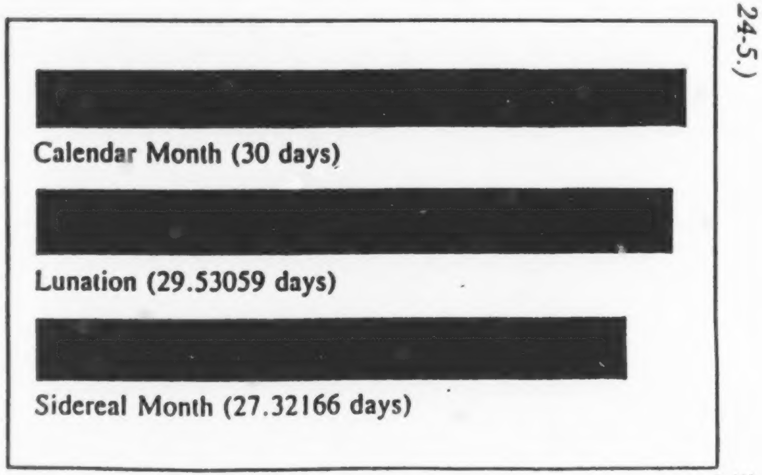
The moon's path is tilted to the ecliptic at an angle of about 5° (shaded area).

# Lunar Month

The moon completes one orbit around the earth every 29.5 days. This period is called a lunation, lunar month, or synodic month. A lunation begins at the time of new moon, and one lunation is officially 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, 2.8 seconds long. If the lunar cycle is measured by timing it in relationship to the position of a specific star (this is called a sidereal cycle), the lunar month is only 27 days, 7 hours, 43 minutes, 11.5 seconds long. The difference between the two measurements is about 2 days a month, which is about how much a full moon will "lag" behind the calendar from one month to the next.

A lunation is a very visible cycle that is easy to observe. Most people, however, notice the full moon instead of the new moon as it is more obvious and think of the lunar cycle as running from full moon to full moon. Either method produces the same measurement, with the lunar cycle running like clockwork, never fast or slow.

Lunations are numbered in sequence. The sequence began with Lunation Number 1, on January 16, 1923. There are 13 lunations in every calendar year because calendar months are longer than lunar months (with the exception of February).



How Do Festivals and Celebrations Convey Aspects of Indian Culture?

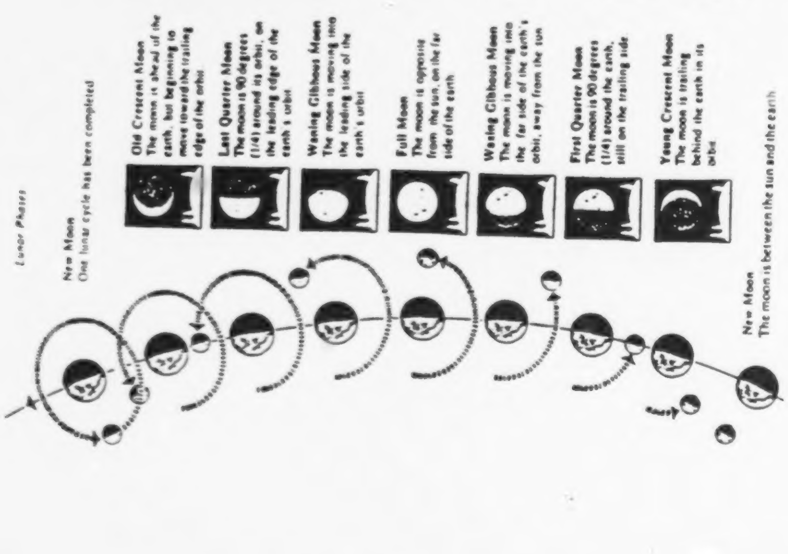
Science Enrichment Worksheet 1: "The Ecliptic" and "Lunar Month"

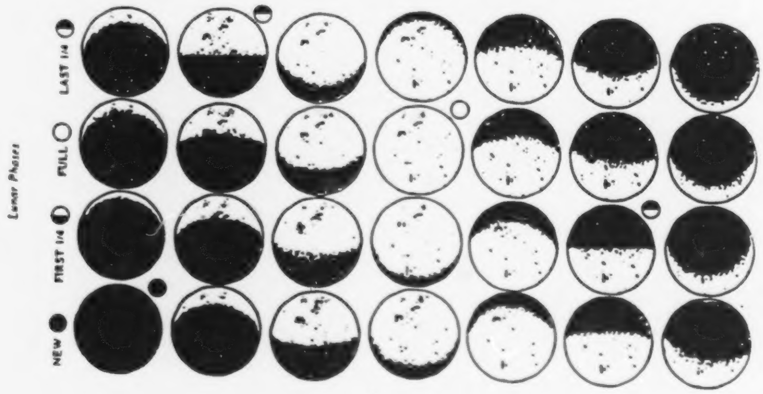
*(Long, Kim, The Moon Book, Boulder, Johnson Books, 1988: 21, 24-5.)*

How Do Festivals and Celebrations Convey Aspects of Indian Culture?

## Science Enrichment Worksheet 2: "Lunar Phases" and "Comparing Moon Phases"

*(Long, Kim, The Moon Book, Boulder, Johnson Books, 1988: 29-31.)*


Lunar Phases
New Moon
One lunar cycle has been completed
Old Crescent Moon
The moon is ahead of the earth, but beginning to move toward the trailing edge of the orbit
Last Quarter Moon
The moon is 90 degrees (1/4) around its orbit, on the leading edge of the earth's orbit
Waning Gibbous Moon
The moon is moving into the leading side of the earth's orbit
Full Moon
The moon is opposite from the sun, on the far side of the earth
Waxing Gibbous Moon
The moon is moving into the far side of the earth's orbit, away from the sun
First Quarter Moon
The moon is 90 degrees (1/4) around the earth, still on the trailing side
Young Crescent Moon
The moon is trailing behind the earth in its orbit
New Moon
The moon is between the sun and the earth


Lunar Phases
NEW
FIRST 1/4
FULL
LAST 1/4

### Comparing Moon Phases

| Days in Lunation | Common Name of Phase | Time of Day |
|---|---|---|
| 0 days | New Moon | *(rises and sets with the sun)* |
| 1 | Waxing Crescent | *(lags a few hours behind the sun)* |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |
| 7.4 | First Quarter | *(above horizon 1/2 in day, 1/2 at night)* |
| 8 | Waxing Gibbous | *(lags 8-10 hours behind the sun)* |
| 9 | | |
| 10 | | |
| 11 | | |
| 12 | | |
| 13 | | |
| 14.8 | Full Moon | *(rises about sunset, sets about sunrise)* |
| 15 | Waning Gibbous | *(precedes sun by 8-10 hours)* |
| 16 | | |
| 17 | | |
| 18 | | |
| 19 | | |
| 20 | | |
| 21 | | |
| 22.1 | Last Quarter | *(above horizon 1/2 at night, 1/2 day)* |
| 23 | Waning Crescent | *(precedes sun by a few hours)* |
| 24 | | |
| 25 | | |
| 26 | | |
| 27 | | |
| 28 | | |
| 29.5 | New Moon | |

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## Worksheet 3: PRANA - "Breath of Life"

*(Khare, R.S., "Annambrahman: Cultural Models, Meanings, and Aesthetics of Hindu Food.", Khare, R.S. ed.,* ***The Eternal Food; Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists****, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992: 207.)*

**Prana, pran** - vital breath, usually differentiated into ten-five inner, five outer-vital airs within live being; popularly, this pran or life rests on food.

> *Prana is a crucial cultural principle. It is a multidirectional metaphor for life and self (hence it also denotes vigor, strength, and power of the soul). The term prana means, among other things, the air inhaled, digestion, and anything or person which is held dear or vital. Prana is fundamental as "breath" is in creatures. "Breathe on me breath of God," the lyrics of an American hymn, express the idea that breath and God are somehow joined. Hindus see breath as symbolic of cosmic energy, of Brahman (the Supreme Spirit).*
>
> *Within one's body, food, once digested, supports breathing. Food sustains prana, the breath which moves as wind (vayu) in different directions within one's body. Thus, while the apana wind moves downward to eject waste (urine and feces), vijana pervades the entire body, samana carries nutrients to the whole body, and udana moves upward (including at the time of death for ejecting the soul). The prana, comprising these five "winds," constitutes an essential worldly template of the Hindu's self. Ayurveda, Yoga, Tantra, and Bhakti - all employ it as a bridge between mortal body and immortal soul (atman).*

If prana is synonymous with life, then food enables one to "to see, hear, reflect, become convinced, act, and enjoy the result" (**Chandogya Upanishad**;Nikhilananda 1963,341)

The wheel model depicts prana as the hub interconnected to the fourteen properties represented by spokes radiating from the center. It is done to show the interrelationships among food, self and creation.

hope

name memory

speech space

mind fire

PRANA

will water

consideration food

mediation strength

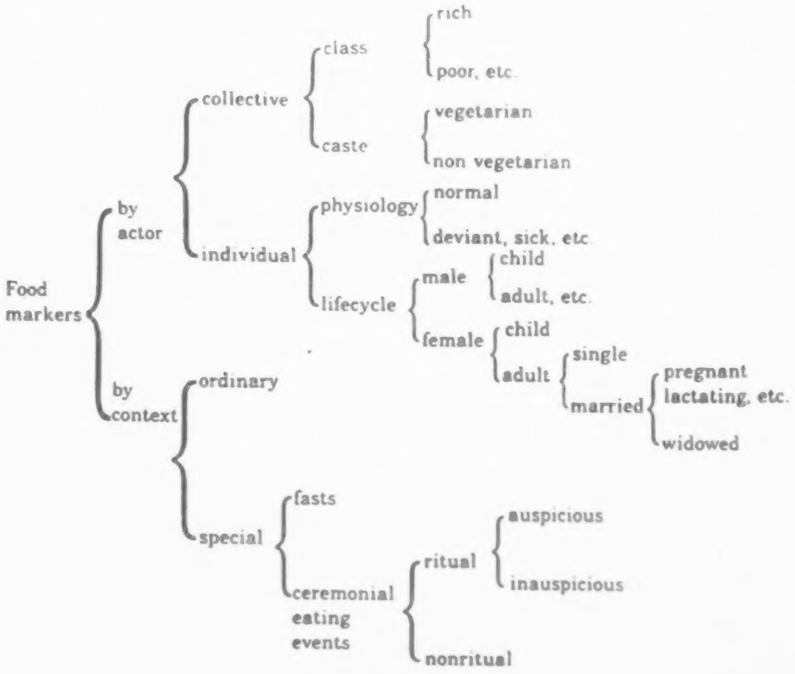
understanding

## Worksheet 4: "Karma-Dharma" of Food "You are what you eat!"

***(Ramanujan, A.K., "Food for Thought: Toward an Anthology of Hindu Food-Images", Khare, R.S. ed., The Eternal Food; Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992: 233.)***

The goal is to distinguish physically injurious and morally improper foods ( by identifying agents, actions, and consequences) from those that are proper, preferable, and healthy. Only morally just food ( a subtle property) can be truly healthy food for the Hindu. The essence of food (anna), as the Hindu popularly says, rests in the annadana (giving of food). The giver earns religious merit while the receiver accumulates a form of debt(rna), to be repaid sooner or later, in this life or the next.

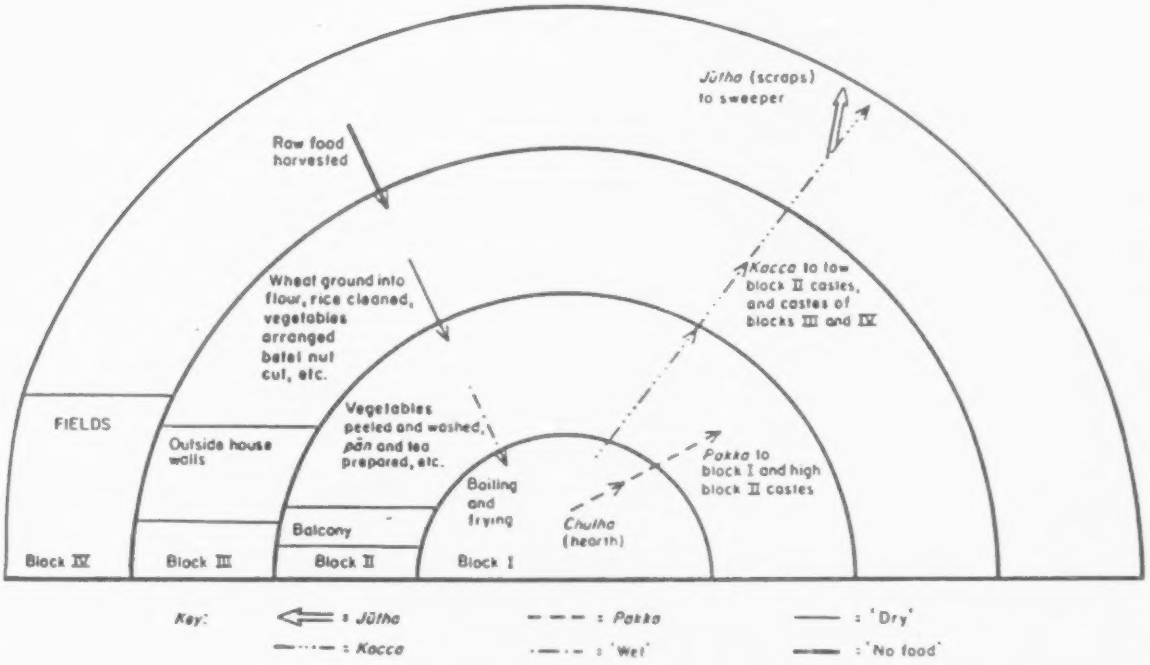
Food Contexts [Ramanujan]


Food markers
by actor
collective
class
rich
poor, etc.
caste
vegetarian
non vegetarian
individual
physiology
normal
deviant, sick, etc.
lifecycle
male
child
adult, etc.
female
child
adult
single
married
pregnant
lactating, etc.
widowed
by context
ordinary
special
fasts
ceremonial eating events
ritual
auspicious
inauspicious
nonritual

Various kinds of markings by food, in social and other kinds of contexts, are associated with learned patterns of social behavior. Class and caste, male and female, child and adult, ordinary and special occasions, auspicious and inauspicious events, sickness and wellness are all marked by the foods that are associated with them. Certain foods are required, or preferred; others are taboo. The gods partake of these markings too: for example, they are vegetarian/nonvegetarian, ordinary/special, Saiva/Vaisnava. Even the utensils food is served in have a message (insiders are served in metal plates, outsiders on leaves).

## Worksheet 5: Commensal Structure of a Feast [Ramanujan]

*(Ramanujan, A.K., "Food for Thought: Toward an Anthology of Hindu Food-Images", Khare, R.S. ed.,* ***The Eternal Food; Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists****, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992: 227.)*


Jūtha (scraps) to sweeper
Raw food harvested
Wheat ground into flour, rice cleaned, vegetables arranged betel nut cut, etc.
Kacca to low block II castes, and castes of blocks III and IV
Vegetables peeled and washed, pān and tea prepared, etc.
FIELDS
Outside house walls
Pakka to block I and high block II castes
Boiling and frying
Chulha (hearth)
Balcony
Block IV
Block III
Block II
Block I
Key:
: Jūtha
: Pakka
: 'Dry'
: Kacca
: 'Wet'
: 'No food'

The Commensal Structure of a Feast. The figure represents the career of food as it is prepared, cooked, served and eaten at an intercaste feast (*bhoj*). It shows how food is progressively transformed by members of castes from progressively higher blocks before being finally served by Brahman cooks. Reprinted with permission from *The International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 1980, vol 8: 297–317

The diagram points to another expressive pattern: social distance is expressed through the distance from the kitchen. The nearest relatives and friends are admitted to the kitchen and fed close to the cooking stove, others farther and farther away, depending on how distant they are socially, ritually, or by caste.

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## Worksheet 6: Prasada/Prasad: "Leftovers of the Gods"

*(Ramanujan, A.K.,"Food for Thought: Toward an Anthology of Hindu Food-Images", Khare, R.S. ed.,**The Eternal Food; Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists**, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992:226.)*

### The Hindu Food Triangle [Ramanujan]

FOOD
(medhya)

BEFORE

EATING

AFTER

LEFTOVERS

FECES
(amedhya)

The triangle and hierarchy of food/leftovers/feces is commonly accepted. The giving and the taking of these three things ( food, leftovers, and feces) places people on the hierarchy. Food is what you offer the gods; the other two cannot be offered-in the epics, when demons wish to disrupt a sacrifice, they pour garbage and feces into the sacrificial fire. In straight usage: servants, animals, beggars (all low on the hierarchy) may eat leftovers; leftovers cannot be served to a superior or a god. Leftovers (enjalu, in Kannada) also means saliva, which pollutes.

In Hindu bhakti practice, all food is first offered to the household god, and then received back as his prasada. Hindu food becomes (rather than only represents) the prasada (divine grace rather than only divine leftovers). The devotee feeds the divine in a mood of love and intimacy, as a part of his worship. Food most often is the favorite medium for expressing personal love between devotee and the divine:

Krishna likes butter and certain milk sweets
Rama requires sedate regal offerings
Hanuman favors specific gram-flour sweets.

In common belief, god's prasada never becomes feces; it feeds only the spirit. Traditionally, for ritual purification, one eats panchagavya, or the five products of the sacred cow, mixing milk, ghee and curds (the best food) with cow's urine and cow dung. In fact, this is rarely done.

Irony, defiance, appreciation, intimacy, are communicated by collapsing commonly held distinctions. Sabari, the low-caste devotee in the Ramayana, served fruits to Rama after she had tasted them, reversing the hierarchy, giving god her leftovers instead of receiving them from him.

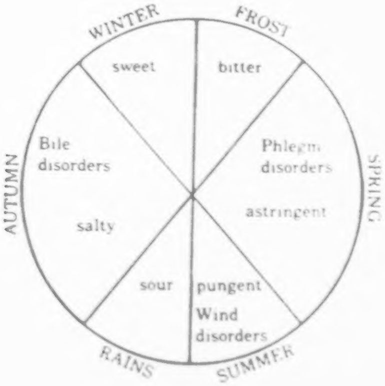
## Worksheet 7: Taste - "Food that satisfies"

(The *Bhagavagita*, XVII, 7-10)

> (7) Threefold again is food-[food] that agrees with each [different type of] man:[so too] sacrifice, ascetic practice, and the gift of alms. Listen to the difference between them.
>
> (8) Foods that promote a fuller life, vitality, strength, health, pleasure, and good-feeling,[foods that are] savory, rich in oil and firm, heart-gladdening,-[these] are agreeable to the man of goodness.
>
> (9) Foods that are pungent, sour, salty, stinging hot, sharp, rough, and burning,-[these] are what the man of Passion loves. They bring pain, misery, and sickness.
>
> (10) What is stale and tasteless, rotten and decayed,-leavings, what is unfit for sacrifice, is food agreeable to the man of Darkness. (trans. Zaehner 1969)

The six tastes are related to the six seasons, which affect the balance of humors in the body. All foods have medical properties, not just the apple a day. There is much disagreement from community to community over which foods items cause "heating" and which "cooling." In south India, but not in the North, papayas are considered extremely heating.

Meals are organized around these rasas as well as textures, temperatures, smells and colors.



*(Ramanujan, A.K.,"Food for Thought: Toward an Anthology of Hindu Food-Images", Khare, R.S. ed., **The Eternal Food: Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists**, Albany, State University of New York Press. 1992:230.)*

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## Worksheet 8: Symbolism of Color

*(Hanchett, Suzanne,* ***Colored Rice; Symbolic Structure in Hindu Family Festivals****, Delhi, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1988: 151-2.)*

"Who says you have to like **red** meat?"

Beauty is another basic concept in festivals. This concept includes both visual delight and order. Relationships among colors are the most important semantic dimension of festival structure. Ritual colors define the basic forces that are in contention during the festival. A married woman's unique strength is in her woman's wealth and her alliance with her goddess. This quality is represented by yellow/gold. Her strength is mobilized, through her disciplined attitude (whiteness), to enable her to control biological energies (red), fend off danger (black, some red), and thereby protect the continuity (white) and prosperity (yellow/gold) of her husband's family. Concepts symbolized by specific colors are given in Table 27.

**Table 27 - Concepts Symbolized by Colors**

| WHITE | RED | BLACK | YELLOW/GOLD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chastity, as sexual discipline; duty to family line; continuity of family | Vitality, sexuality, generative life forces | Death or the deceased; poverty; obstacles | Prosperity; beauty; married woman |

Birth and growth are symbolized by a minor color, green. Ritual combinations of colors express several ways in which life forces interact, or to control the destructive force of any one color. Table 28 depicts alternate meanings of isolated and combined colors.

**Table 28 - Symbolism of colors, Isolated or Combined**

| ISOLATED COLORS | COMBINED COLORS |
|---|---|
| White: withdrawal from sexuality; extreme spirituality; purity | White+Yellow: Power of chastity to produce wealth, beauty or family continuity |
| Red: uncontrolled energy (color of Brahman widow's sari) | Red+Yellow/Gold: Sexuality in marriage |
| Black: Physical death; poverty; widowhood | Black+Yellow/Gold: Power of the married woman to protect against death; struggle between poverty and prosperity in family life - emphasis on the opposition or dilemma; overcoming obstacles |
| Gold: wealth not exchanged; daughter not married (dowry retained) | |

## Worksheet 9: Food Chain

*(Ramanujan, A.K.,"Food for Thought: Toward an Anthology of Hindu Food-Images", Khare, R.S. ed.,* ***The Eternal Food; Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists****, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992: 222-3.) (After the Sanskrit,* ***Taittiriya Upanishad*** *[translated by Ramanujan])*

From food, from food
creatures, all creatures
come to be.

Gorging, disgorging,
beings come
to be.

By food they live,
in food they move,
into food they pass:

food, the chief
of things, of all things
that come to be,

elixir,
herb of herbs
for mortals.

Food, food, Brahman is food:
only they eat
who know
they eat their god.

For food is the chief
of things, of all things
that come to be:

elixir
herb to herbs
for mortals.

From food all beings
come to be,
by food

they grow,
into food
they pass.

And what eats is eaten:
and what's eaten, eats
in turn.

## Worksheet 10: The Garland of Madurai

The following excerpt from the Tamil poem "The Garland of Madurai," appropriately describes many fairs and festivals in India today. "The Garland of Madurai" was written in the third century C.E.

> It is a festival day and the city is gay with flags.
> The streets are broad rivers of people,
> Folk of every kind buying and selling in the market place,
> Or singing the music of wandering minstrels.
> A drum beats, and a procession passes.
> Stall-keepers ply their trades,
> Selling sweet cakes, garlands of flowers, scented powder and trinkets.
> People flock to the temples to worship to the sound of music,
> Laying their flowers before the images.
> Craftsmen work in their shops,
> Making bangles of conch,
> Goldsmiths, cloth-dealers, flower-sellers, vendors of sandalwood, painters and weavers.
> Food shops busily sell their wares,
> Greens, fruits, mangoes, sugar candy, cooked rice and chunks of cooked meat.
> In the evening the streets are full of music.
> Respectable women make evening visits to the temples carrying lighted lamps as offerings.
> They dance in the temple courts which are clamorous with their singing and chatter...
> Morning comes with the sounds of priests intoning their sacred verses.
> All over is heard the sound of opening doors.
> Women sweep the faded flowers of the festival from their courtyards.

**utsava** - Sanskrit word for festival, or inspiring event, is mentioned in the Rig Veda, written more than 3,000 years ago.

They celebrate divine feats, exemplary moral victories or cosmological occurrences. Durga Puja, Pongal, and Tij are utsava.

**mela** - Sanskrit word for fair(s) held at pilgrimage sites and reported in texts such as the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The first historical report of a mela was written in 644 C.E. by the Chinese traveler, Hsuan Tsang. They are a combination of religious, commercial and pleasurable events, with several components: facilities for pilgrims and visitors, a temporary bazaar or market, performance areas and entertainment diversions.

## How Do Festivals and Celebrations Convey Aspects of Indian Culture?

## Worksheet 11a: Ram Navami

**Ninth day of the bright of the moon, Caitra 2:9**
**Hot season**

Ram Navami celebrates the birth of Rama, the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu. Rama was the ideal king of legendary India, establishing Ramraj, the rule of righteousness. He was reputed to have ruled Uttar Pradesh from his capital in Ayodhya. His birth is of significant importance throughout India. Rama was born exactly at noon on the ninth day of the bright of the moon in the month of Caitra (March/April). To begin the festival a coconut, or an image of Rama, is arranged in a cradle in the shrine. At noon, amid great ringing of bells and blowing of conch shells, the doors of the shrine are thrown open and the priest announces the birth of Rama. All the audience sing songs in honor of the god. All attention is focused on the cradle. The noise is indescribable, with some people singing, and others beating kettle drums and gongs, or playing on pipes and cymbals. At this time, presents are made to the temple.

During the eight days preceding Ram Navami the *Ramayana* is read, or tales from the *Ramayana* are told. Listening to the stories and reading the text is considered auspicious."It destroys the sins of one who is able to read even a small part of it."(Valmiki) Repeating the name of Rama is one of the devotional exercises in Vaishnavism(worship of Vishnu as the Supreme Deity). Temples resound with the cadence of the rhythmic repetition of the name of Rama.

Ram Navami may last for nine days. During this time the temples are decorated and the images of Sri Rama are bathed in sacred water and decorated with ornaments and flowers. Devotees arise early in the morning, bathe and go to the temple for prayer. During the late afternoon of a hot day, guests in the home are offered fans to cool their brows and hot weather foods.

Stage shows depicting episodes of the *Ramayana* are popular features of Ram Navami. In Uttar Pradesh Ramlila is presented along with the burning of effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Surpanakha. Other Ramlilas, including the spectacular Ramnagar Ramlila, are performed at Dussehra (October/November).

## Worksheet 11b: Sri Rama is Born

*(The Syracuse Ramayana in the Ramayana tradition. This is the story of Rama and how he fought the ten-headed demon, Ravana.)*

One of the greater Gods had promised Ravana that he could not be killed by any god or demon. Now Ravana had become a real pest to the greater Gods and to the holy men because he knew none of them could harm him - after all, he was a demon. His arrogance and pride knew no bounds.

What could any of them do about Ravana ? Led by Brahma, all the Gods came to the Great God, Vishnu, for help. Vishnu had a plan.

Vishnu knew that Ravana did not fear men or monkeys, and he hadn't asked to be kept safe from them. So Vishnu's plan was to come to earth Himself as a man. Only an exceptionally brave man could defeat and destroy Ravana. And such a person could be none else but Vishnu in human form. He asked the other Gods - the Sun and Wind and Lightening and Fire Gods - to be born as monkeys.

Vishnu shrank his Spirit and entered a small gold jar of divine milk and rice pudding (payasam).

Long, long ago, in the ancient times, at the end of the Treta Yuga, there was a mighty kingdom of Kosala. Situated on the banks of the river Sarayu was its capital Ayodhya. Ayodhya means unconquerable, not to be warred against, or irresistible.

Dasaratha was the king of Kosala. He hailed from the famous Ikshvaku dynasty. He was loved by one and all in his kingdom because he cared for the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. Even though Dasaratha had everything to make him happy he was very sad because he had no children. He had no son who as an heir could inherit the crown after his death.

His great guru and sage Vashista knew the king's grief and its cause. Therefore, Vashista advised the king to perform the grand horse-sacrifice in order to obtain sons. Dasaratha poured ghee on the sacrificial fire while sages chanted the Vedic hymns.

The Gods were much pleased with Dasaratha's sacrifice. There arose from the sacrificial fire a splendid being with a pot of gold in his hands. Calling Dasaratha by name he handed over the pot of gold saying, "The Gods are pleased with you and have sent you this heavenly payasam. Divide this among your three wives and your wish will be fulfilled."

The king received the gift joyfully and distributed the payasam to his three wives. Half of it he gave to Kausalya, half of what remained he gave to Sumitra, half of the rest he gave to Kaikeyi, and what remained he gave again to Sumitra. Such indeed was the potency of this divine payasam that all of them shone with the radiance appropriate to the presence of a divine being in their wombs.

In due course of time, in the pleasant month of Caitra, Queen Kaushalya gave birth to Rama,the oldest. Queen Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata and Sumitra, the youngest queen, to twins Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

King Dasaratha and the queens rejoiced immensely in them and thanked the Gods. There was much celebration. The crowds, mad with joy, sang, danced and played on various instruments. Rich gifts were distributed among the people. The gods rejoiced in the heaven, dancing, singing sweet tunes, and playing on flutes and drums.

That happy day is celebrated even now as Ramanavami, the day of Sri Rama's birth. Rama Navami means "Rama who was born on the ninth day."

## Worksheet 12: Divali/Dipavali

**Night of the new moon in Kartik: Kartik 1:1**
**End of the monsoon, beginning of the cold season**
**Harvest of rainy season crops**

Divali is one of the best known and most popular Indian festivals which celebrate the victory of good over evil. Although recognized throughout India, it reflects the diversity of the society. The celebrations can last from one to five days. The five day festival begins on the last two days of the month of Asvin (Sept. - Oct.), in the dark of the waning moon, and continues into Kartik (Oct. - Nov.). Merchants begin the new financial year by cleaning and repainting their business establishments, writing off bad debts and opening new account books on the first day. The second day is celebrated by ritual bathing. Divali proper (Kartik 1:1) is the third day, and the fourth is an agricultural festival when cattle are taken in procession. On the fifth day, brothers visit their sisters for a feast.

Twenty days after Dussehra, Divali celebrates the return of Rama from his fourteen year long exile in the forest, after his victory over Ravana. It marks the coronation of Rama, the beginning of Ramraj, the rule of righteousness. Dipavali means a file of earthen lamps. The lighting of a lamp is an expression of joy, of welcoming, of an inauguration, of worship, and of dispelling darkness, both of ignorance and of gloom. As night sets in, myriads of small oil lamps (deepaks) are lit in every home. Prayers (Lakshmi puja) are offered to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, whose presence is a part of Divali. Young and old alike light fireworks and firecrackers, all in celebration of Rama's victorious return and the power of good to vanquish evil. The next day is the Vikrami new year's day, Kartik 1:2.

On the night of Divali, Lakshmi is said to travel the land, peering into every home. If she should find a home not freshly swept, without newly whitewashed walls, where all the inhabitants' clothing was not freshly laundered, she would turn away. That family could not hope that Lakshmi would bring them prosperity in the coming year. The lights are to attract Lakshmi, lest she pass over an unlit house or shop that has been prepared for her approval. Even the smallest hut must display at least one small clay saucer with a flaming of cotton wick dipped into a spoonful of oil. Young girls make their own Divali lamps and set them afloat on tiny rafts on some nearby river or stream. If the light burns on as long as its owner can see it, that means good luck for the coming year.

Divali is an important family harvest festival. Houses are cleaned out and old junk is thrown away, and fresh paint or a new coat of cow dung and mud paste is applied. Traditional designs, intricate patterns known as rangoli or kolam are painted by the women on the threshold of each home. These are said to welcome the new year and the goddess Lakshmi. New clothes are bought for all the family. At noon, offerings are made to the spirit of departed ancestors.

## UNIT 20, LESSON 2

### Focus Question: To What Extent is the Ramayana a Unifying Theme in Regional Celebrations?

### Major Ideas
- The birth of Rama is celebrated in both North and South India.
- New Year's Day for the Vikrami calendar is the celebration of Ram's Coronation in Ayodhya.
- There are celebrations which are specific to the North and South regions.

### Performance Objectives Students will be able to:
- locate on a map of India areas designated as North India and South India.
- describe one specific celebration that occurs only in South India.
- evaluate the extent to which the epic *Ramayana* is known throughout India.

### Teacher Background
*In Ramayana a good deal of the geography of South Asia is explored. The journey of Rama affects the land, the people, and the culture in general. The geographical dimension is very important in understanding not only the literature but also the festivals that are derived from the story. It is in this context that the* ***Ramayana*** *story can be seen as a universal image when contrasted with regional celebrations. Despite considerable historical and geographic variation, fairs arising out of festival celebrations show remarkable continuity.*

*Festivals, or utsava (inspiring events) celebrate divine feats, exemplary moral victories or cosmological occurrences. Festivals such as Pongal in Tamil Nadu are closely related to the agricultural cycle, celebrating the harvest.*

### Springboard
- Teacher will ask students to find a peer who came to school in a fashion similar to his.

Students will then find a pair whose fashion was different from theirs to form a group of four. In the group, share will discuss the route they used to get to school and create a product, i.e. map, drawings, directions.

### Procedure
- Students are asked to critique the clarity of the description, map, drawings using the criteria:

  - Is this information clear enough for me to get to my destination?
  - Do I need more information? What additional information do I need?

When we read a story, we also follow "landmarks." The difference between what you just described and the Indian child's experience is that he/she knows the landmarks for the story and follows the same route. Our job is to familiarize ourselves with various places in both North and South India and see how celebration foods are related to the region.

- Distribute **Worksheets 1a - 1d: Maps of India**, and **Worksheet 2: Chart: North, South, East India**

- How do these two maps differ? What is each map trying to show?
- What are the states of North India? South India? East India?
- Which are the states in which Sri Rama lived or traveled?
- In which states are Ayodhya, Panchavati, Mahendra Hill, Ganges River and Lanka located?

We said that Mahendra Hill is in Tamil Nadu.

- Distribute **Worksheet 3: Pongal**. This festival takes place in Tamil Nadu.
- What are the major crops in south India?
- Using the maps and the readings on the calendar, how many harvests occur in south India?
- How does climate and the farming cycle affect festivals on the subcontinent?
- What does Pongal mean? What makes it an expression of thanksgiving?

### Summary/Application

Today in class we learned about Rama's journey throughout India. We also focused on a South Indian festival called Pongal.

▹ Using the information we have already gathered in Ram Navami and Divali, explain the ways in which the three celebrations differ. Within your groups you will devise a method for organizing and depicting these differences.

### Alternate Strategies

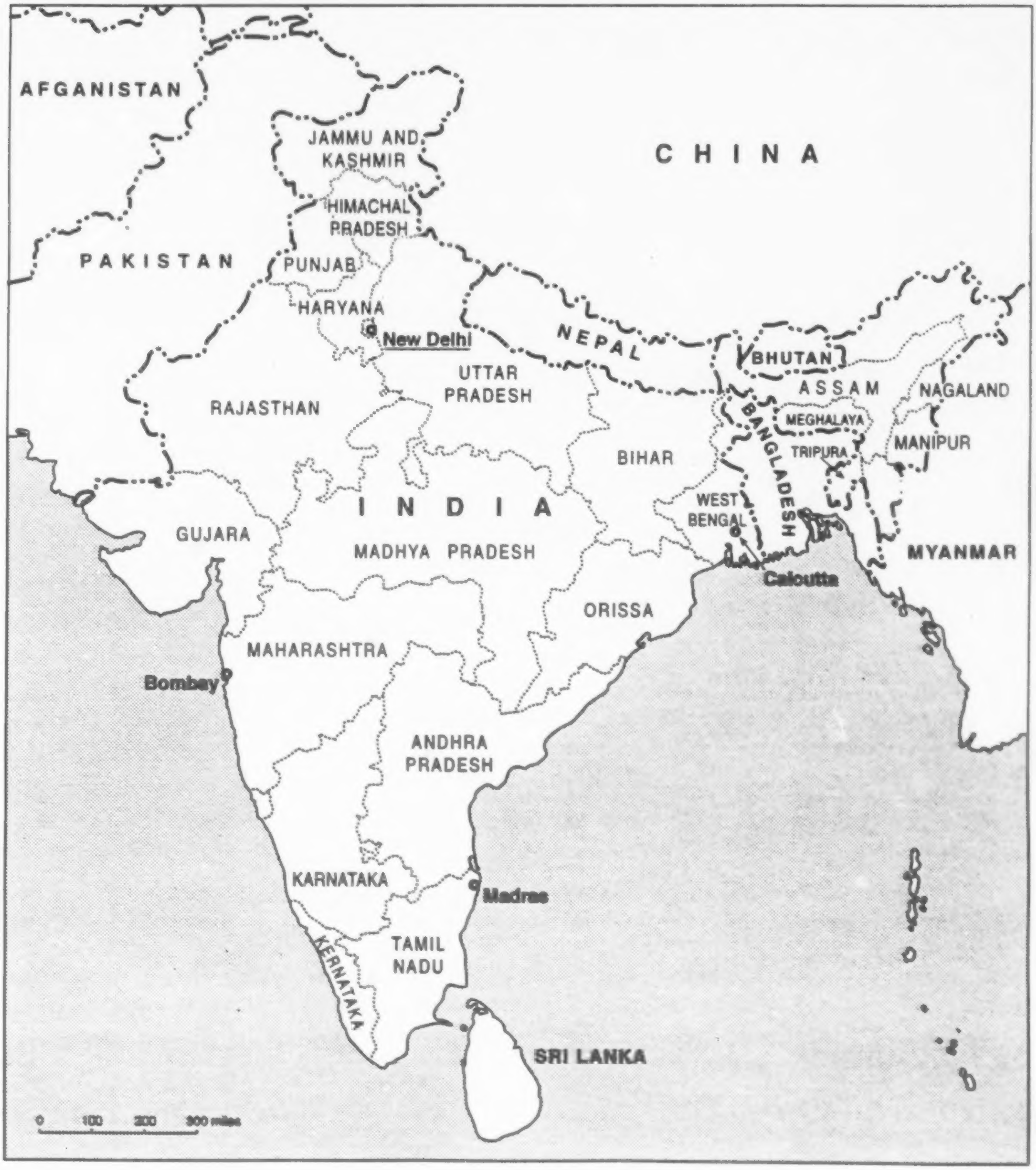
▹ Using the recipe file (see *Spotlight on Ramayana* Appendix) and the festival readings prepare a chart for the class showing the relationship to the crops grown north and south and the foods prepared for *Ram Navami*, *Divali*, and *Pongal*. Present your chart to the class and discuss the harvest relationship to the foods served.

▹ Use **Worksheets 4 and 5** for additional reading assignments.

## To What Extent is the Ramayana a Unifying Theme in Regional Celebrations?

### Worksheet 1a: Political Divisions of South Asia

*(Syracuse University Cartographic Laboratory)*


AFGANISTAN
JAMMU AND KASHMIR
CHINA
HIMACHAL PRADESH
PAKISTAN
PUNJAB
HARYANA
New Delhi
NEPAL
BHUTAN
UTTAR PRADESH
RAJASTHAN
ASSAM
NAGALAND
BANGLADESH
MEGHALAYA
TRIPURA
MANIPUR
BIHAR
INDIA
WEST BENGAL
GUJARA
MADHYA PRADESH
MYANMAR
Calcutta
ORISSA
MAHARASHTRA
Bombay
ANDHRA PRADESH
KARNATAKA
Madras
TAMIL NADU
KERNATAKA
SRI LANKA
0 100 200 300 miles

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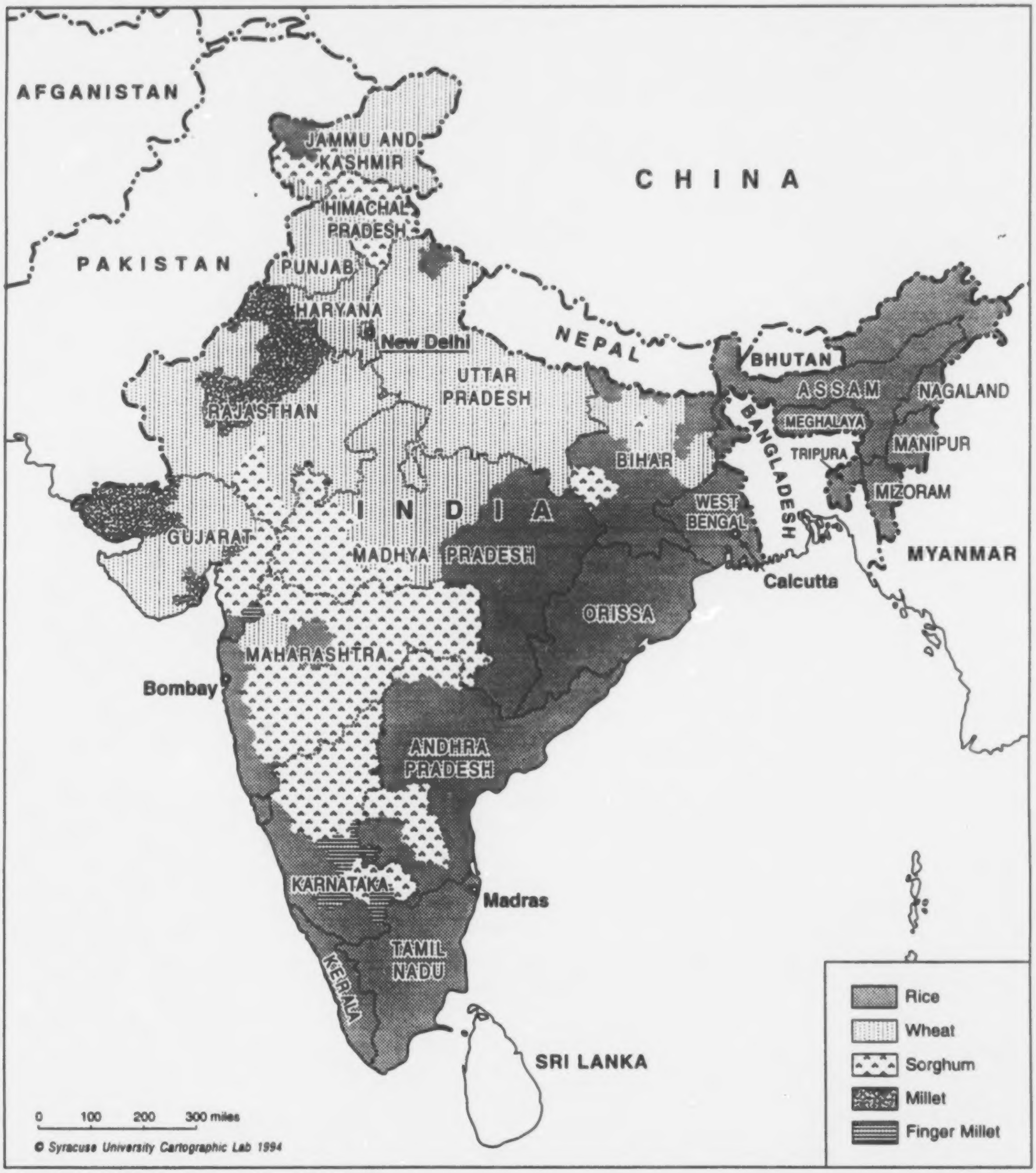
## Worksheet 1b: The Chief Crops of India

*(Syracuse University Cartographic Laboratory)*


AFGANISTAN
CHINA
PAKISTAN
JAMMU AND KASHMIR
HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUNJAB
HARYANA
New Delhi
NEPAL
BHUTAN
UTTAR PRADESH
RAJASTHAN
ASSAM
NAGALAND
MEGHALAYA
TRIPURA
MANIPUR
BANGLADESH
BIHAR
MIZORAM
INDIA
WEST BENGAL
GUJARAT
MADHYA PRADESH
MYANMAR
Calcutta
ORISSA
MAHARASHTRA
Bombay
ANDHRA PRADESH
KARNATAKA
Madras
TAMIL NADU
KERALA
SRI LANKA
0 100 200 300 miles
© Syracuse University Cartographic Lab 1994
▨ Rice
▨ Wheat
▨ Sorghum
▨ Millet
▨ Finger Millet

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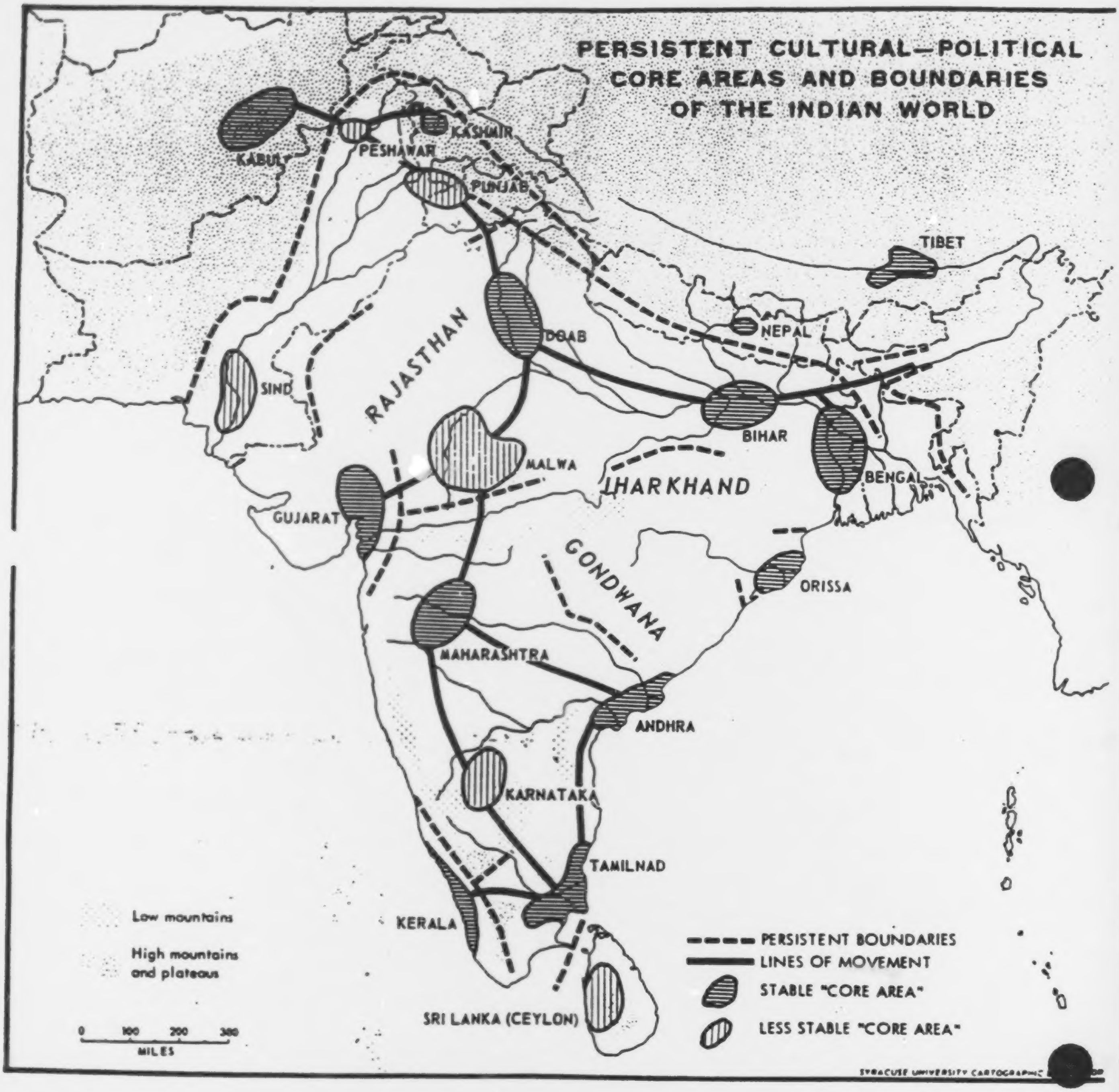
## Worksheet 1c: Persistent Cultural-Political Core Areas and Boundaries of the Indian World

*(Syracuse University Cartographic Laboratory)*


PERSISTENT CULTURAL—POLITICAL CORE AREAS AND BOUNDARIES OF THE INDIAN WORLD
KABUL
PESHAWAR
KASHMIR
PUNJAB
TIBET
NEPAL
DOAB
RAJASTHAN
SIND
BIHAR
MALWA
JHARKHAND
BENGAL
GUJARAT
GONDWANA
ORISSA
MAHARASHTRA
ANDHRA
KARNATAKA
TAMILNAD
KERALA
SRI LANKA (CEYLON)
Low mountains
High mountains and plateaus
0 100 200 300
MILES
PERSISTENT BOUNDARIES
LINES OF MOVEMENT
STABLE "CORE AREA"
LESS STABLE "CORE AREA"
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY CARTOGRAPHIC LABORATORY

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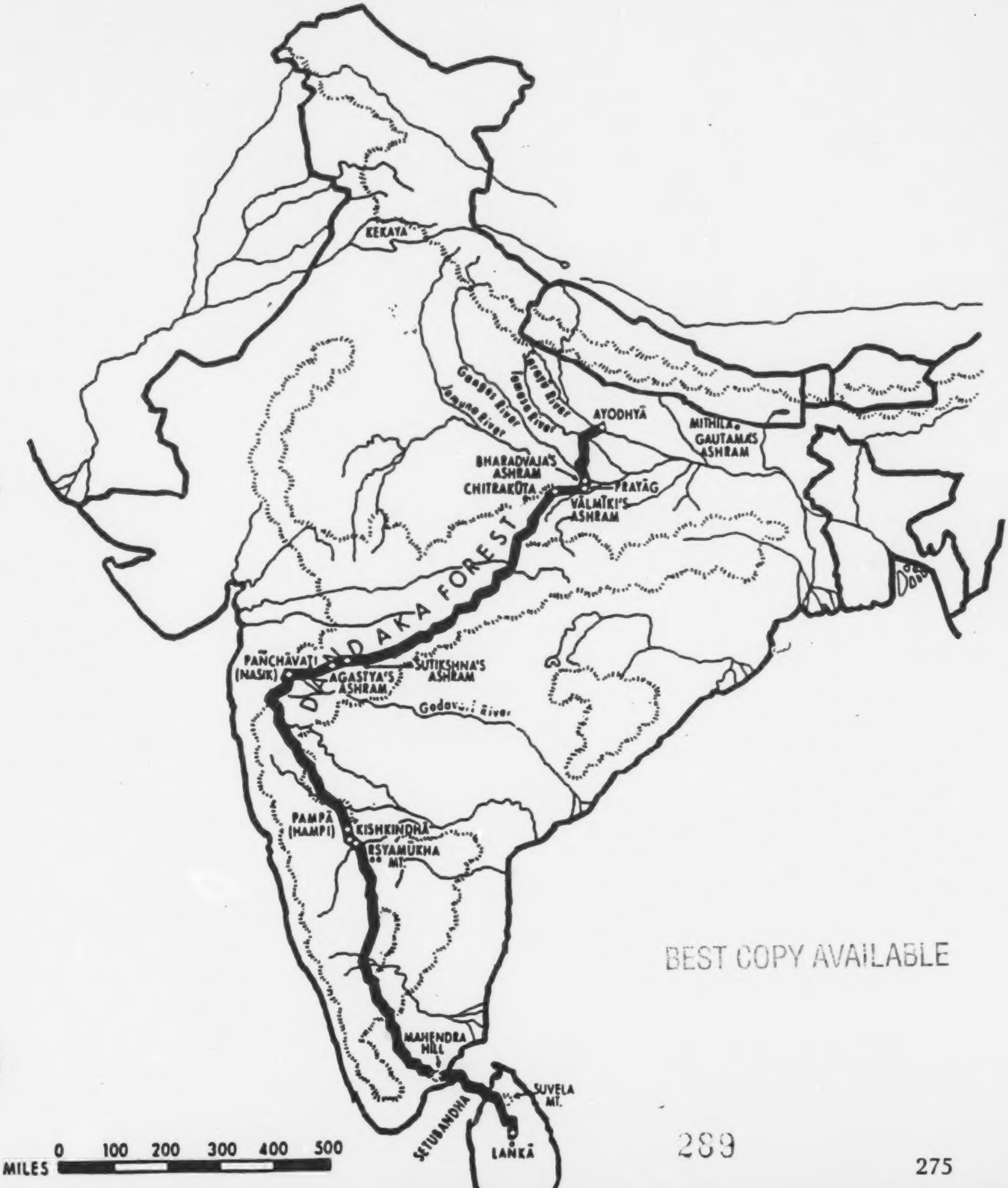
## To What Extent is the Ramayana a Unifying Theme in Regional Celebrations?

### Worksheet 1d: Traditional Rama-Yatra (Itinerary of Ram)

*(Syracuse University Religion Department booklet, pp.81)*


KEKAYA
Jamuna River
Ganges River
Tamasa River
Sarayu River
AYODHYĀ
MITHILA
GAUTAMA'S ASHRAM
BHARADVAJA'S ASHRAM
CHITRAKŪTA
PRAYĀG
VĀLMĪKI'S ASHRAM
DANDAKA FOREST
PAÑCHAVATI (NASIK)
SUTIKSHNA'S ASHRAM
AGASTYA'S ASHRAM
Godavari River
PAMPĀ (HAMPI)
KISHKINDHĀ
RSYAMŪKHA MT.
MAHENDRA HILL
SUVELA MT.
SETUBANDHA
LANKĀ
MILES
0 100 200 300 400 500

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To What Extent is the Ramayana a Unifying Theme in Regional Celebrations?

**Worksheet 2: North, South, East India**

| SOUTH | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|
| Kerala | Gujarat | Bihar |
| Tamil Nadu | Rajasthan | West Bengal |
| Adhra Pradesh | Uttar Pradesh | Orissa |
| Karnataka | Madhya Pradesh | Assam |
| Goa | Himachal Pradesh | Arunachal Pradesh |
| Maharashtra | Punjab | Nagaland |
| Pondicherry | Haryana | Manipur |
|  | Delhi | Mizoram |
|  | Jammu | Tripura |
|  | Kashmir | Meghalaya |

Using the map, 1a: **The Political Divisions of South Asia,**

- shade in the designated areas - south, north, east - using three different colors.
- Locate and label Lanka.

Using the map, 1b: **Persistent Cultural-Political Core Areas and Boundaries of the Indian World,**

- Consult the chart and place a star beside the name of each state which is also a cultural/political core area. Add the names of any core areas not already on the lists. Be sure to place them in the correct regional area (south, north, or east).
- Fill in the "What I Know" Chart using information from all four maps, festival and story sheets, and group discussion.

**What I Know Chart**

| WHAT I KNOW | WHAT I LEARNED | WHAT QUESTIONS I HAVE |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## To What Extent is the Ramayana a Unifying Theme in Regional Celebrations?

## Worksheet 3: The Festival of Pongal

**Winter solstice-Makar Sankranti**
**Celebrated in the south only**
**Cold season**
**Rice harvest**

Pongal is the Tamil name for the passage of the sun into the zodiacal sign of Capricorn. In other parts of India, Makara Sankranti ("transit into Capricorn") identifies when the sun begins its northerly journey. According to Hindu belief, this day is the beginning of an auspicious six-month period when the gods are awake and the demons asleep. Astronomers challenge the date of January 14th for Makara Sankranti, arguing that the movement of the sun begins with the winter solstice on January 9th.

In Tamil Nadu the festival coincides with the completion of one of the two rice harvests. Many harvest festivals follow the same pattern: agricultural work stops, houses are cleaned and repainted, doorways are decorated, and new clothes are worn. The women are up before dawn, bathing in the river or temple pool, called a tank. At Pongal mothers buy new pots and stoves for daughters, which are set up and waiting for the main activity of the festival, boiling newly harvested rice together with milk and sugar. Everyone watches expectantly for the first bubbles. Quick boiling is interpreted to mean good luck for the coming year. At the sign of the first bubbles, the women call out, "Pongal! Pongal!". Pongal means "it's boiling!" The excitement over the boiling pudding is mixed with thanksgiving for the harvest which made the pudding possible.

This is a three-day harvest festival and one of the most important events in south India. The first day, Bhogi Pongal, is spent visiting family and friends. On the second day, Surya Pongal, the sunniest spot in the courtyard is decorated with kolam and there pongal is offered to Surya, goddess of the sun. On the next day, Mattu Pongal, cows (*mattu*) and bullocks, so essential to the rural world, are part of a thanksgiving ceremony and are washed, decorated and fed liberal quantities of pongal.

In some towns in the south, the festival is climaxed by a kind of bullrace, Jallikattu, in which young men try to wrestle bundles of currency notes from the horns of a ferocious bull. Villages send their best bulls and cheer the bull as it races through the streets. The village is shamed if a victorious youth wrestles the prize from their bull. The sport initially was held as a contest between competing grooms seeking the hand of the same village girl. In other areas, kites are flown and at the end of the day let go, to take away any evil spirits.

## Worksheet 4: The Temple of Ayyappan at Sabarimala

*(adapted from Gupta, Rupa, South Indian Folk Tales, New Delhi, Hemkunt Press, 1989:22-8. (A-78 Naraina Indl. Area, Phase-I New Delhi-110028)*

Once there was a terrible demon called Mahishi. Many tried to slay her to stop her killing and destruction. But she was too powerful. At last even the gods became worried and prayed to the great gods, Vishnu and Shiva to save the world from the wicked Mahishi. The two gods promised to create a child who would grow up and kill Mahishi.

Now this was the time when Rajashekhara was king of Panthalam. He had prayed often to the gods for a son. While hunting in the forest he came upon a baby boy lying on the ground. Light seemed to be coming out of his body, and he wore a golden bell around his neck. He gathered the child into his arms and blessed the gods for answering his prayers.

Both the king and queen loved the baby and named him Manikanthan (He was also known as Ayyappan). A few years passed in bliss until the queen gave birth to a son and her feelings began to change toward Manikanthan. She became jealous of her husband's love for the boy and hated to think of Manikanthan as king instead of her own son.

She decided to have him killed and began to plot with some of the wicked ministers who were also envious of the king's love of the boy. Soon the Queen pretended to be very ill. The doctor told the King that she was suffering from a terrible disease and that only the milk of a tigress would save the Queen's life. Then he went home to count his bribe money.

The King was very upset and sent word throughout the kingdom that anyone who could get tigress milk would be richly rewarded. Many young men tried, but lost their lives, none could bring the milk of the tigress. Then the twelve year old Manikanthan announced to his father that he would go into the forest and get the cure his mother needed. The King pleaded with him, saying you are too young, too inexperienced. Manikanthan insisted, arming himself with his bow and arrow he entered the forest all alone. Deep in the forest the evil Mahishi attacked him. With one shot of his arrow she fell dead. Manikanthan continued his search for the tigress.

That evening as the sun began to set in the west the people heard a terrible sound like hundreds of fireworks being set off together. All the people ran out of their houses and the King and Queen rushed to their terrace. She had forgotten to be sick. A fearful sight met their eyes. Their son, riding a tigress, was rushing toward the town accompanied by hundreds of other tigers.

The people cried, "He is no ordinary mortal!" "Oh my divine son, have mercy on us; make the tigers go away," cried the king. As everyone watched in wonder, the roaring stopped and all the tigers turned and walked quietly into the forest.

The Queen and all the courtiers fell at the feet of the young prince and begged forgiveness, asking him to sit on the throne. He refused. He told them that he had come to the earth to rid the world of the demoness and now his work was done. He had to return to heaven.

Hearing this Rajashekhara made one last request to his divine son. "I want to make a temple to you. Where shall I build it?" Taking an arrow out of his quiver, he told the king to build the temple wherever the arrow fell. And then he shot the arrow. It fell right on top of Sabari Hills. A beautiful temple was built and it is said that the sage Parasuram himself came down to earth disguised as a sculptor and gave Rajashekhara an image of Manikanthan to place in the temple. Parasuram revealed himself in his true form and told the king to have the opening of the temple on the day of Makara Sankranti. A strange and wonderful thing happened that day, for as soon as Manikanthan lighted the lamp the flame began to move towards the inner temple and entered the idol. There was a blaze of light and the whole world lit up for a few moments and there was darkness again. Manikanthan was never seen again but to this day it is believed that Manikanthan comes to earth and lights the lamp at the temple of Ayyappan on Makara Sankranti every year.

## Worksheet 5 - The Holy Cow

*(Gandhi, M.K.(1954). **How To Serve the Cow**, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.*

*Mattu Pongal is the special day in Tamil Nadu when cows are recognized and special attention is given to them. In other parts of India there are special days when cows are celebrated with thanksgiving. Even the Indian Constitution places a ban on the slaughter of cows (Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 48). Here are two passages from Gandhi explaining the unique role of cows in Hinduism.*

> "The central fact of Hinduism is cattle protection. Cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means that the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives...The motive that actuates cow protection is not `purely selfish,'though selfish consideration undoubtedly enters into it. If it were purely selfish, the cow would be killed, as in other countries, after it had ceased to give full use."
>
> \- Gandhi (1954, pp.3,5)

> "The cow protection ideal set up by Hinduism is essentially different from and transcends the dairy ideal of the West. The latter is based on economic values, the former while duly recognizing the economic aspect of the case, lays stress on the spiritual aspect viz. the idea of penance and self-sacrifice for the relief of martyred innocence which it embodies. Under a dairy ideal, means do not count, even cow slaughter is resorted to for insuring cheap milk supply and getting rid of what are supposed to be uneconomic and superfluous cattle. under the religious ideal, means are the principal thing-in fact everything. The essence of cow protection according to Hinduism thus does not lie in the mechanical act of `saving' the animal per se...but in the self-purification and penance behind the act."
>
> \- "P." (Gandhi, 1954, pp.85-6)

## UNIT 20, LESSON 3

### Focus Question: In What Ways do Indians pay Homage to the Women of Their Society?

### Major Ideas

- In many cultures, the woman is symbolic of Mother Earth.
- In Indian culture, women are represented by many deities who possess shakti.
- The male gods must have a female consort through whom they may obtain shakti.

### Performance Objectives Students will be able to:

- define key terms: Hinduism, Hari, Parvati, shakti, goddess, matriarch, agriculturists.
- analyze the importance of women's place in society.
- compare and contrast Indian goddesses to those of Western mythology.

### Teacher Background

*The religious lives of Hindus do not follow a single uniform pattern. Instead, there are hundreds of different sectarian, regional, local, caste, and family traditions that exist side by side and in combination with one another. Individuals may also adopt for themselves particular kinds of religious observances. Hindus worship many gods and goddesses, venerating them as different aspects of divinity. The pantheon of "high" gods recognized all over India includes Vishnu, his incarnations Rama and Krishna, Shiva, the mother-goddess in her various forms as Parvati, Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, and Sarasvati, and the elephant-headed god Ganesha. In addition, there are many gods that are unique to particular regions, and innumerable minor deities are worshiped at the village level.*

*Parvati, the consort of Shiva, is the symbol of complete womanhood. Being the daughter of King Himalaya, she is also known as Hemputri (daughter of the snows). Of her one thousand other names and different manifestations, representing each and every aspect of Mother Nature, the most popular are Gauri, the goddess of abundance; Uma, the ascetic risen above passion and possessiveness; and Parvati, representing a devoted housewife.*

*Teej is an all-woman affair in north India and Durga Puja and Navarati pay homage to the goddesses Durga and Saraswati.*

### Springboard

"Women's rights should be recognized because of women's socially useful role as mothers."

✎ Have students write individually and then discuss with a partner their reactions to the above statement. Students should pay particular attention to how they feel when the opinion is different from theirs.

- What made you commit to your position?
- How did you react to disagreement with your position?
- What made you react to the disagreement as you did?

### Procedure

- Divide the class into groups. Distribute **Worksheet 1: Teej; Worksheet 2: Dussehra/Vijaya Dashami; and Worksheet 3: Durga Puja.**

Have each group read and examine a specific festival that focuses on the image of women. Each group will answer the following questions about their festival:

- What is the image of women used as the focus of the celebration?
- How does the woman demonstrate power?
- What is the "right" behavior expected?

▸ Have students present and compare their findings. Each group will respond to questions for clarification.

- Show a clip of the movie **Modern Brides**.

### Summary/Application

- At the end of the 20th century, how would you recognize and commemorate the role played by women in your life so that your culture can survive?

### Alternate Strategies

Like other regions of the world, India has its own unique foods and distinctive style of cooking. Prepare a pictorial chart with descriptive captions to illustrate some of the region's foods or styles of cooking. Display the chart in the classroom or use it as you give an oral report to the class on "Foods of India".

## In What Ways do Indians pay Homage to the Women of Their Society?

## Worksheet 1: Teej (Tij)

**Hariyali tij - Green Third: Savan 2:3**
**Women's festival**
**Monsoon or rainy season**
**Wheat and barley harvested in March & April**
**Cucumber and melons harvested in May & June**
**Celebrated in the north only**

*Teej* (Hariyali tij), an all-woman affair, is a festival that falls on the third day of the dark half of *Savan* (June/July). It is a colorful affair, spanning two days. Celebrated in North India it is an important festival for daughters, who ideally visit their parents' home during this month (Wadley 1994). The presiding deity is Parvati who, in the form of a bride, is worshiped at home for two days and is given the send off to her husband's home on the following day. The sending off of a bride by her parents is a touching custom among the Hindus. In North India daughters may not marry within their village.

Dressed in their festive best, villagers from all around flock to witness the procession of the goddess Parvati with her retinue of elephants, camels and dancers. Song and dance add charm to the festival.

Savan marks the beginning of the monsoon which brings respite to the severe summer of Rajasthan. Hari means green. Often referred to as Green Third, "greenness" as the symbol of prosperity and good fortune are equally celebrated in the festival. Specially decorated swings are strung to trees and women dress up gaily to swing in the light drizzle of Savan, singing songs in praise of Parvati. Traditionally, the swing is strung to a mango tree which is considered to be auspicious.

The festival of Teej has strong hints of being influenced by the fertility devotees. That it is an all-woman affair, the element of a newly-wed being sent off with her husband, the wearing of new green glass bangles, the dressing up in one's best as a bride would, swinging under a mango tree (the mango being a symbol of fertility), and celebrating the newly born grass with song and dance, are all pointers in that direction.

The spring harvest of wheat and barley is the main income producing crop. Loans are often repaid following this harvest. The hot season month falling in May, after the harvest, is the most auspicious time for weddings, for farmers are freed of their chores and the harvest can cover the wedding costs. Teej fits neatly into this harvest pattern with its emphasis on vidai and the visits of daughters to their parents' homes in this festival.

## In What Ways do Indians pay Homage to the Women of Their Society?

### Worksheet 2: Dussehra/Vijaya Dashami

**New moon in Asvin 1:1-10**
**Cold season, end of the monsoon**
**Harvest of rice and corn**

Dussehra means "ten nights" and Vijaya Dashami means "the tenth day of victory". It is the culmination of the ten day celebration of the victory of good over evil. Dussehra marks the defeat of Ravana, the demon king, at the hands of the god Rama. A righteous war which was finally won on the tenth day of the month of Asvin. Durga was one of the divine helpers who came to Lord Rama's assistance in his battle with the invincible demon Ravana described in the Ramayana. The grand finale of the celebration is the burning of the effigy of Ravana and his cohorts, symbolizing his defeat and death at the hands of Rama.

Weeks before the festival is due to begin, professional and amateur groups - the latter consisting of young children - gather together to make effigies of the demon and his sister and brother Surpanakha and Kumbhakarnar. They are usually figures with a mannequin-like frame bearing two spindly legs, a skirt, two arms, and chest. The frame is covered painstakingly with pink, green, yellow, and brown to make up the tall, ugly and imposing shapes of demons. The inside is filled with firecrackers. On the day of Dussehra, thousands flock to the fairgrounds where the demons stand tall and imposing. The high point in the festival comes when the god Rama (usually played by a young man) arrives just before dusk, and shoots flaming arrows into the bodies of the demons. The resulting fire and noise are cheered by the multitudes as evil is banished yet again by the powers of good.

Nightly leading up to Dussehra, groups perform Ramlila, the dramatic performances that recount the life of Rama. Perhaps the most spectacular Ramlila is the one that takes place in the holy town of Ramnagar, across the banks of the Ganga from Varanasi. Here the whole village becomes the playground for the story, and the villagers its actors. All year long the village prepares for the lila, which is then acted out in stages over a period of nearly a month.

Every region observes this ten-day festival in a special way. North India and areas where Hindi is spoken perform Ramlila, burning the effigies. In the Kulu valley of the Himalayas, a religious procession of the sixty local deities takes place with the goddess Hirma Devi presiding as the most powerful. Mysore and Jaipur have a warrior's holiday with a durbar, a royal reception followed by a procession. Both honor equipment for warfare and the beasts of transport remembering their martial pasts. Kings considered Dussehra auspicious for beginning military expeditions. Bengal and eastern India celebrate Durga Puja, and south India recognizes the season with Navaratri.

## In What Ways do Indians pay Homage to the Women of Their Society?

## Worksheet 3: Durga Puja

**New moon in Asvin 1:1-10**
**Cold season, end of the monsoon**
**Harvest of rice and corn**

*Durga Puja* is celebrated beginning on the first night of the new moon in Asvin (September/October) and continuing for nine days of partial fasting. Images of the goddess riding a lion are installed in peoples homes and public shrines along with icons of the elephant-headed Ganesha, his brother Karttikeya, and Lakshmi and Sarasvati. These replicas may be simple or carefully crafted unbaked clay images fashioned by craftsmen. For four consecutive days elaborate worship ceremonies are held morning and evening to celebrate Durga's victory over an evil demon in the form of a water buffalo. The practice of sacrificing a live water buffalo during Durga Puja is being replaced. A pumpkin is sliced in two before the goddess representing the buffalo demon in a symbolic sacrifice. People from all walks of life visit shrines and receive the tilak, a dab of colored paste on the forehead, from the priest. The end of Durga Puja is marked by the immersion of the replicas of the goddess Durga in the sacred river. The images are too sacred to be destroyed or left to crumble, since each holds a bit of the spirit of the god. Durga Puja, celebrated mainly in Bengal and eastern India, has been carried beyond the borders of its home state by migrant Bengali communities. In south India Navaratri,"nine nights" celebrating Saraswati, the goddess of fine arts, learning, and all crafts occurs at this same time. People visit each other's homes to see the artistic displays arranged for the occasion. On the ninth day farmers and workers clean their tools and instruments and honor them with special puja, so that Saraswati might bless them.

Durga is one of the manifestations of the Mother Goddess of Puranic Hinduism, *Devi*. She has a thousand names representing all things in nature. Her beginning is traced in the scriptures to a time when the gods had need for her. A powerful demon Mahishasura had driven Indra and the demigods out if heaven. Not even Vishnu and Shiva could help. Ambika, the original name for the goddess, came into being from the combined power, divine force, attributes, and weapons of all the gods and their consorts (wives). To remove evil, and reestablish the rule of Good, Ambika destroyed the archdemon Mahishasura.

Devi is all things to all people. As Shakti or primordial energy, she represents cosmic dynamics, and animates all things. In this aspect, Shiva, usually her husband, is Shava (corpse) to her. As Durga, she is the goddess of war, of power, of destruction perpetually at war with Evil. As Kali, she devoured all-devouring Kal (time) itself. As Jagadamma, she is the All-merciful Mother nourishing the universe. As Parvati, she is a dutiful housewife, enjoying domestic felicity with her husband Shiva and their two children, Ganesha and Kartikeya. As Sati, she is the devoted wife who burnt herself to death to avenge a slight on her husband by her father. As Raktadanti (of bloody teeth) she is the presiding deity of blood and carnage. As Kumari, she is the Virgin, most pure. As Lalita she is a resplendent beauty attracting all attention. As Uma, she an ascetic. The goddess has thus an aspect to suit every human mood, and her worship during Durga Puja is just as varied.

## In What Ways do Indians pay Homage to the Women of Their Society?

### READINGS

*Divali*

South Asia Curriculum, Teaching About India,"Lakshmi and the Clever Washerwoman", p.93. adapted from Seasons of Splendour:A Book of Tales,Myths and Legends of India,by Madhur Jaffrey, 1985.

The Village By The Sea, Anita Desai,New Delhi, Puffin Books,1982,p.144-157 or p.148-151.

*Durga Puja*

South Asia Curriculum, Teaching About India,"The Old Man and The Magic Bowl", p.94. adapted from Seasons of Splendour:A Book of Tales,Myths and Legends of India,by Madhur Jaffrey, 1985.

*Dussehra*

Ramayana- the defeat of Ravana

*Festivals*

The following excerpt is from the Tamil poem "The Garland of Madurai," written in the third c. C.E.

It is a festival day and the city is gay with flags.
The streets are broad rivers of people,
Folk of every kind buying and selling in the market place,
Or singing the music of wandering minstrels.
A drum beats, and a procession passes.
Stall-keepers ply their trades,
Selling sweet cakes,garlands of flowers,scented powder and trinkets.
People flock to the temples to worship to the sound of music,
Laying their flowers before the images.
Craftsmen work in their shops,
Making bangles of conch,
Goldsmiths, cloth-dealers,flower-sellers.vendors of sandalwood,painters and weavers.
Food shops busily sell their wares,
Greens, fruits, mangoes, sugar candy, cooked rice and chunks of cooked meat.
In the evening the streets are full of music.
Respectable women make evening visits to the temples carrying lighted lamps as offerings.
They dance in the temple courts which are clamorous with their singing and chatter...
Morning comes with the sounds of priests intoning their sacred verses.
All over is heard the sound of opening doors.
Women sweep the faded flowers of the festival from their courtyards.

***utsava*** - Sanskrit word for festival, or inspiring event, is mentioned in the Rig Veda, written more than 3,000 years ago. They celebrate divine feat, exemplary moral victories or cosmological occurrences. Durga Puja, Pongal, and Tij are utsava.

***mela***-Sanskrit word for fair(s) held at pilgrimage sites and reported in texts such as the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The first historical report of a mela was written in 644 C.E.by the Chinese traveler, Hsuan *Tsang*. They are a combination of religious, commercial and pleasurable events, with several components:facilities for pilgrims and visitors,a temporary bazaar or market, performance areas and entertainment diversions.

*Office of Folklife Programs Smithsonian Institution, The Living Arts of India, Indian Fairs and Festivals, Supplemental Manual No. 4, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, 1986: 23-4. (Office of Education, National Museaum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560)*

***Food***

As says a hymn from the Chandogya Upanishad:

> "When the food is pure, the mind becomes pure. When the mind is pure, the memory becomes firm. When the memory is firm all [worldly] ties are loosened" (in Nikhilananda 1963,347; also Kane 1974,757).

"Let him being pure and attentive carefully place on the ground the seasoning (for the rice) such as broth and potherbs, sweet and sour milk and honey

As well as various (kinds of) hard food which require mastication and of soft food, roots, fruits, savory and fragrant drinks

All this he shall present and being pure and attentive successively invite them to partake of each, proclaiming its qualities

- Cause them to partake gradually and slowly (of each dish) and repeatedly invite them to eat by offering the food and proclaiming its qualities

All food must be very hot and the guests shall eat in silence

Having addressed the question `Have you dined well?' to his guests, let him give water for sipping and dismiss them with the words `Rest (either here or at home)' "Laws of Manu 226. 227. 236. 257 (G. Buhler)

The taboo of saliva and leftovers is lifted for children:

***Children***

Even when a man has earned much
of whatever can be earned,
shared it with many,
even when he is master of great estates,
if he does not have children

who patter on their little feet,
stretch tiny hands,
scatter, touch,
grub with mouths

300

and grab with fingers,
smear rice and ghee

all over their bodies,
and overcome reason and love,
all his days
have come to nothing.

*(Pantiyan Arivutai Nampi Purananaru 188 [Ramanujan 1985, 160])*

*Teej*

Womens' songs celebrate this season, as with this excerpt from a song sung by Tailor girls:

Hariyali tij, oh my sister, color is everywhere.
Hariyali tij, oh my sister, color is everywhere.

Oh sister, who had my shawl dyed?
Oh sister, who had my shawl dyed?
Oh listen someone, who, oh who, had a necklace made for me?
Oh my brother, who took me to meet my dearest friends?
Hariyali tij, oh my sister, color is everywhere.

Oh sister, my mother had my shawl dyed,
Oh listen someone, my father, oh my father,had a necklace made for me.
Oh my brother took me to meet my dearest friends.
Hariyali tij, oh my sister, color is everywhere.

Oh my mother, when, oh when, will my shawl be worn?
Oh listen someone, when, oh when, oh when, will my necklace be worn?
When, oh when, my brother, will I meet my dearest friends?
Oh on tij,I'll wear my shawl, child,
Oh listen someone, on Snake's Fifth, oh on Snake's Fifth,*

I'll wear my necklace, and at Savan, my brother, I will meet my dearest friends.

*Snake's Fifth (nag pancmi) takes place on the fifth day of the bright half of Savan (July-August). During the monsoon, snakes are a greater threat than at other times, since their normal habitats are flooded. Women worship snakes on this day, especially Basuk Dev, the king of snakes.

*Source: Wadley, Susan, Struggling with Destiny in Karimpur, 1925-1984, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994, p.130.*

***Women***

"Tidiness is the lustre of the home
A contented wife is indeed its Laksmi;
The happiness of the home lies in its tranquility,
In hospitality lies its grandeur
And righteousness is its crowning glory."

("Dedication", Nayak, Narayani, 500 Easy Recipes, A New Approach, Secunderabad, 1965.)

301

# All's Well That Ends Well

## UNIT 21, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: Is Communal Conflict Inevitable in India?

### Major Ideas

- Religious differences are a fact of life in many countries. However, these religious differences may be a point of conflict. It is important to identify the source of tension as often being in the political, social, or economic sphere, rather than the religious area.
- It is important to determine if religious differences must result in conflict, violence, and oppression.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- identify conflicts around the world which ostensibly result from religious differences, looking at the issues at the core of the dispute.
- pursue a conflict resolution model in finding a compromise or a solution to the conflicting interests.
- evaluate the basis on which the alternate claims on the land are made.

### Teacher Background

*Religion is often a source of conflict in the world. As we look at the religious conflict in India and some of the arguments made by each side, we ask if these people are really arguing about religion, or it its something else they're upset about.*

*The conflict in India today revolves around a building. This building was a mosque, or an Islamic house of worship. This mosque was built by a Muslim ruler. The Muslims came from the Middle East and controlled the people of India for many centuries from the 15th century until the time of the British Raj. These Muslim rulers were replaced by the British in the 1850s. India regained control over its own government with independence in 1947.*

*Since the Indian people gained independence, this mosque has been an issue because it is reputed to be the birthplace of an important religious figure, Prince Rama. In the* **Ramayana**, *an epic written 2500 years ago, Rama defeats the demon king, Ravana. The story is told and well known among the peoples of South, Southeast, and even East Asia. Many Hindus, for whom Rama was a incarnation of their greatest god Vishnu, have come to believe that the Muslims destroyed a temple to Rama in order to build the mosque. These Hindus, but not all Hindus, called for the destruction of the mosque, which represented to them the Muslim control over the centuries, and the "rebuilding" of a temple to Rama.*

*There are a great number of Indians, Hindu and Muslim, Christian and Jewish, intellectuals and just ordinary people, who are secular and abhor the violence religious intolerance has caused in India. Their arguments try and contextualize religious fundamentalism in history and relationships of power.*

## Springboard

We all know that throughout history there have been times when the people in power have encouraged and promoted conflict between peoples. The best example we have of that is the Holocaust.

- How did Hitler and the Third Reich encourage conflict between peoples?
- Why was Hitler successful in using religion as a rallying point to gain followers?
- What other examples can you find of political groups who use religion for their specific purposes?
- Why do these attacks against another religious group often occur during times when there are great pushes for modernization and liberalization?

*(If possible, begin lesson with a viewing of a short segment from* **Fiddler on the Roof***. Remind students of the sense of distrust between Christians and Jews in the film. It should be noted that these religious differences did not make communication impossible. Ties across cultures were highlighted with Tevye and the Constable, and, of course, Havel and the Christian.)*

## Procedure

Religion can be a point of conflict between people.

- What religious groups do we have in this community?
- What religions do we have in the United States?
- What religions are there in the world?
- Are any of these religions involved in conflicts with others?
- Geographically, where is this an issue?

India is one of the regions of the world experiencing conflict based on religion.

▸ Distribute **Worksheet I: How Did It Happen? Stages in the History of Ayodhya**.

- What are the issues in this conflict?
- What is the Hindu point of view?
- What is the Muslim point of view?
- How is this issue a political conflict today?

▸ Show video footage of the Rathayatra and the destruction of the mosque. *(These are available in a video by Anand Patwardhan,* ***Ram ke Naam*** *(In the Name of God).)*

- How does this footage show the feelings of the two sides?
- What religious atrocities is each side committing?
- Do you think they should be stopped? How? Explain your answer.

## Summary/Application

In our schools we mediate conflict through a peer mediation model.

- How can we use the peer mediation model to solve this conflict?
- Do you think it will work?

303

## LESSON 2: Why Can We Say There Are "Two Sides to Every Story?"

### Performance Objectives: Students Will be Able to

- identify the issues for Hindus and Muslims.
- compare and contrast each argument of each camp.
- assess why there are two sides to every story.

### Springboard

- Teacher should write the following statement on the board. (Any similar controversial statement will also elicit discussion.)

> ***"The Iroquois people were here first in New York so they deserve rent for the land taken from them"***

- Students will respond to this statement.

  - Do you think there are "two sides to any issue"?
  - In your own experience, what issues are you aware of that has two points or view, or more?

- We will now try to look at the issues involved in the Ayodhya controversy. Distribute **Worksheet 2: Paired Arguments**. This worksheet includes 26 statements - 13 statements which represent the arguments of the Fundamentalist Hindu Nationalist community point of view on the Ayodhya conflict; 13 statements which represent the Muslim argument refuting each of the nationalist arguments. (If class size is over 26, positions can be created for scribes, reporters, and spokespersons.)

  - Assign statements/arguments to each student. (Argument Cards can be created: Hindu cards will be marked with **"om"** and be **yellow**, Muslim cards will be marked with the **crescent moon** and be **green**.) Students will be instructed to find the other side of their argument. In order to accomplish this task, the students are to carefully read their argument, and **identify** the key issue. This key point will be addressed in their opposite's card.

  - Once all the students have found their "partner" argument, this pair, which represents the two sides of one argument, will fill in **Worksheet 3: Two Sides to Every Issue.**

  - After the class has completed Worksheet 3, the key ideas or issues will be listed on the board, as described by the conflict pairs. These issues are **Faith, Worship, Symbol, Destiny, Pride/Nation, Government, Minority Issues, Extremists, Secular, Fundamentalism, Power, Earning a Living, Violence**.

  - Worksheet 3 will be collected at the end of class to evaluate student understanding of issues and concepts and to allow modification of the assignment if necessary.

## LESSON 3 - Organizing Your Forces

### Springboard

- If you have a problem with a friend or a relative, what are some good methods you can use to mediate the problem?
- Which have you used?
- How have you felt during the process?

### Procedure

▸ Today the students will be gathering in groups to make a list of their demands based on the arguments developed in the previous lesson. The tasks are as follows:

❶ As a group prepare for the mediation by organizing their ideas and finding out what they're about.

❷ Students will gather as Hindus and Muslims and discuss the issues involved in the conflict.

❸ In order to resolve the conflict, the groups are to complete a group project showing their understanding of the history of the religion, its geographic scope and its major beliefs. Possible products include:

- a flag or banner which represents their group
- a map showing the geographic extent of its influence
- list of major beliefs or ideas
- brief description of history of the religion and its importance in the history of India
- a list of the statements on the argument cards written in their own words as a guide for the mediation. Students are to then choose 2 representatives to speak in a conflict resolution forum. If there should be extra time, you might want to have the groups discuss what qualities would be useful in a negotiator.

## LESSON 4: Can Mediation Resolve All Conflicts?

### Procedure

▸ For the purpose of today's lesson, invite a mediator to class to mediate the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims. Please make sure that the mediator will get a complete file on the conflict before he/she comes to the classroom and take the Secular Indian position as outlined in **Worksheet 4: A Third Side**.

The role of the mediator is to:

- establish the "ground rules" for the mediation process.
- fully explain the process to all parties involved.
- work with each side in the conflict to help them establish their goals.

▸ Students who observe the conflict resolution procedure. During the process they are to evaluate each side on a scale of 1 - 10 in terms of:

- ✓ Use of information
- ✓ Persuasiveness of argument
- ✓ Listening and answering other side's concerns
- ✓ Passion for topic
- ✓ Overall impression

✎ Write a paragraph describing which side they personally support with at least two reasons.

As a part of the assignment students are also to evaluate how successful the mediation was in getting people to air their differences and find a compromise.

**Summary/Application**

▸ The final assignment is due a week later. The task is to investigate a supposedly religious conflict in any region of the world, and using at least two sources, to give the background of that conflict and evaluate what issues outside of religion are involved.

✎ This final writing assignment can be structured more carefully in a Regents essay format and will be included as part of the essay grade, which is 20% of their overall average. Assignments along the way will be given credit as homework, and students will receive a project grade for their participation in the group work of preparation for the conflict resolution.

## Worksheet 1: How Did It Happen? Stages in the History of Ayodhya

*(A section is reprinted from Venkatesananda, Swami,* ***The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki****, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988, pp.3-4)*

*India is a land of many regions, many peoples, many religions, and a long and varied history. Part of the history of India includes a story told of a prince who was a an incarnation of one of the great gods of the Hindu pantheon. This prince was named Rama, and stories are told of him throughout India and its neighboring countries. This Prince Rama is one of the best loved of all the Hindu heros because he is seen as a perfect king. The stories of Rama which have been handed down generation to generation over thousands of years tell of his wondrous defeat of the king of the demons, Ravana of the ten heads. This story, called the Ramayana, is probably the best known story in the world, but it has very different meanings for different people.*

*Part of this story is set in Rama's childhood and youth before he got married. The oldest written version of this story, written about 500 BCE in a language few people could read either then or now, says that Rama was born in the kingdom of Kosala. Read below a section from an English translation of this very ancient book describing his birthplace:*

There was a mighty kingdom known as the Kosala on the bank of the holy river Sarayu. Its capital is Ayodhya, a city which was built by ... the first ruler on earth during the present day world-cycle. This vast city is [over ninety-six miles] long and [over twenty-four miles] wide. It is a powerful and prosperous city. The city is well-planned and laid out, surrounded by an impassable moat. In it are embassies of kings who pay tribute to the emperor; and in it are traders from many countries of the world. Its roads are clean and wide; and its faultless water-supply system provides good and sweet water for all its inhabitants. It has seven-story buildings decorated with precious stones and it is resplendent like a celestial body. It is protected on all sides by mighty and faithful warriors who make it utterly invulnerable. In that foremost among cities, the citizens are happy, devoted to righteousness, learned and wise, truthful, contented with the wealth they have and therefore free from avarice (greed). No one in that city is poor or destitute. No one is ignorant or cruel. Everyone leads a well-regulated life of piety and charity. Everyone has faith in God and the scriptures...Narrow-mindedness and pettiness are unknown in that city.

- Valmiki, *The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki*, pp 3-4

Another part of Indian history involves the invasions of powerful Muslim armies from Central Asia in the 15th Century. These Muslims controlled the region and ruled over the people of India. The Muslims introduced a new religion to India, Islam. Islam promised equality to all believers. Many of the people who were at the bottom of the society in India chose to become Muslims in order to gain more self-respect. As part of the expansion of Islam, the Muslim rulers built mosques in the cities and villages they ruled. It is a mosque built in the 1500s by a local Muslim ruler that became the center of the conflict we will look at.

The rulers who replaced the Muslims were the British in the 1850s. The British did similar things to the Muslims. As part of their governance, they introduced their religion Christianity and built many buildings; some churches and some governmental buildings. When India achieved independence from Great Britain in 1947, the differences between

Hindus and Muslims resulted in partition, the splitting off of Pakistan from India. With the creation of Pakistan by Muhammad Ali Jinnah the Muslims felt safe from discrimination by the Hindus in India. Not all Muslims felt in danger in an independent India and chose to stay because Gandhi promised a secular state; a country with no national religion. This was written into the Constitution of India.

Recently, as part of a political campaign the BJP, or Indian People's Party, suggested that a mosque in the modern city of Ayodhya had been built on the ruins of a temple to Rama's birthplace. This party asked people to buy bricks to rebuild the temple, and began a campaign throughout India. The leader of the party fixed up a truck to look like an ancient chariot and traveled throughout the country reminding people of the great rule of Rama in ancient times. He was very successful in gaining supporters to follow him.

**Exercise**

- What kind of a city was Ayodhya? Why was it considered a special city?
- Would you would like to live in Ayodhya? Why or why not?
- Why is what happened in the 15th century important to Indian history?
- How did the partition of India further confuse the issue in Ayodhya?

**Vocabulary** Write the definitions of the following vocabulary words.

MOSQUE

ISLAM

MUSLIM

HINDU

HINDUISM

RAMA

TEMPLE

SECULAR

MINORITY

## Is Communal Conflict Inevitable in India?

### Worksheet 2: Paired Assignments

Of the following 26 statements, 13 represent the arguments of the Fundamentalist Hindu Nationalist community point of view on the Ayodhya conflict, and 13 represent the Muslim argument refuting each of the nationalist arguments. Hindu statements are marked with "*om*", and Muslim statements are marked with the **crescent moon ☾**.

### FAITH, BELIEF

*om* We BELIEVE that Ayodhya is the sacred birthplace of the greatest hero of Hinduism.

☾ We BELIEVE that a mosque is a holy place and forcefully putting idols in it desecrates it.

### WORSHIP

*om* The mosque was never a place of religious devotion or WORSHIP.

☾ The mosque was not a place of WORSHIP because Muslims are discriminated against as a minority.

### SYMBOL

*om* The mosque is a SYMBOL of the Muslim conquerors; we must be liberated from the humiliation of centuries of control by foreigners.

☾ The mosque is a SYMBOL of our ancestors. It is our duty to maintain their name.

### DESTRUCTION

*om* A temple was DESTROYED to build the mosque.

☾ Idols were put in it to DESTROY the mosque.

### PRIDE, NATION

*om* This is an issue of Hindu PRIDE; a true Hindu should stand up for the Indian nation.

☾ As a NATION we should recognize our Muslim heritage.

### GOVERNMENT

*om* If the GOVERNMENT were truly interested in the good of the people of India, they wouldn't stand by and allow Rama's birthplace to be controlled by Muslims.

☾ The GOVERNMENT claims that it is secular; it has a special obligation to defend our rights as a minority.

### MINORITY ISSUES

*om* In a recent divorce case, the government denied a Muslim woman alimony because Muslim law doesn't support the idea. They should not give special treatment to MINORITIES.

☾ Muslim law must be upheld, as Hindu family law is upheld.

### EXTREMISTS

*om* All problems in this country are blamed on Hindus, and not EXTREMIST Muslims who are causing all the problems.

☾ Don't blame and mistrust all Muslims for the actions of a few EXTREMISTS who are well-supplied by foreign powers.

### SECULAR

*om* People who try to say our government should be SECULAR are betraying the people of India and their true beliefs in the Hindu gods.

☾ Muslims have just as much a right to live and believe in their god as do Hindus.

### FUNDAMENTALISM

*om* Islamic FUNDAMENTALISM is a great threat to India today.

☾ Hindu FUNDAMENTALISM is a great threat to India today.

### POWER

*om* Hindus are losing economic and political POWER in their own country. We must take back that which is ours.

☾ Muslims are losing economic and political POWER.

### EARNING A LIVING

*om* How can an honest Hindu EARN A LIVING when those Muslims keep breeding like rabbits?

☾ We have a right to determine the size of our families.

### VIOLENCE

*om* The VIOLENCE results from our religious feeling and purity of purpose.

☾ Muslims are wrongly accused of starting riots.

## Is Communal Conflict Inevitable in India?

### Worksheet 3: Two Sides to Every Issue

**Instructions**
Fill in the following worksheet with your "conflict partner" using your position cards you have picked in class.

✎ Write down the argument made by the Hindu side next to the word Hindu, and the argument made by the Muslim side next to the word Muslim.

HINDU

MUSLIM

Discuss the following questions with your conflict partner.

- What is the ISSUE, the idea, that the two sides disagree on?
- What do you and your partner think they are really arguing about: religion, land, education, other?
- What is the relationship between the issue and religion?

## Worksheet 4: A Third Side

*In response to* ***Worksheet 2: Paired Assignments****, following are the arguments of the Secular Indian. A mediator, taking the views of the Secular Indian, will mediate the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims.*

**FAITH, BELIEF** The Rama story is a myth, and there is no evidence on which to base the BELIEF that Ayodhya is his birthplace.

**WORSHIP** Let's convert it to a museum for peoples of all faiths.

**SYMBOL** The mosque is a SYMBOL of an era of great advancement because of the blend of Muslim and Hindu culture.

**DESTRUCTION** There is no reliable evidence that any temple was DESTROYED to build the mosque.

**PRIDE, NATION** As Indians we are PROUD of the Indian tradition of diversity and tolerance of many religions and cultures.

**GOVERNMENT** The GOVERNMENT of India must defend the rights of all its citizens regardless of religion and whether they are rich or poor.

**MINORITY ISSUES** The laws of the government must apply equally to all Indian citizens whether they belong to the MINORITY or the majority.

**EXTREMISTS** There are EXTREMISTS on both sides and the voice of reason must prevail.

**SECULAR** The strength of our country depends upon its SECULAR nature. Politicians who support one group over another betray the secular nature of the government.

**FUNDAMENTALISM** Any religious FUNDAMENTALISM is a great threat to governments because it hides the real problems of inequality, education, and poverty.

**POWER** Minorities and lower caste people need extra help to gain more POWER and economic security.

**EARNING A LIVING** Communal violence and riots keep the poor from leaving their houses and EARNING A LIVING. When police impose a curfew they cannot work or buy food.

**VIOLENCE** Why is it these conflicts happen in urban areas? The VIOLENCE is started by the gangs. How can it be religious when the people attacking are bootleggers and thugs?

## UNIT 22, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: What Role Does Nature Play in the Ramayana?

### Main Idea

- Hindus and Americans both value wildlife.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- gain a better understanding of the *Ramayana*.
- evaluate the role of animals in *Ramayana*.

Students will read the cartoon version of the *Ramayana* published by H.G. Mirchandani.

### Springboard

This news bulletin appeared in a local paper:

> *"Two teenagers were arrested today for stabbing and killing a male swan trying to protect its female mate who was nesting at the Manlius pond. The community was up in arms at this senseless attack on the swan, with whom many residents were familiar from visiting and feeding the birds at the pond regularly."*

- What was the cause of the extreme revulsion at this act?
- What is your reaction to this news event?

### Procedure

It is interesting that the inspiration for the writing of Valmiki's *Ramayana* came from witnessing a similar event.

Here is the story of how Valmiki came to write the *Ramayana*: (adapted from *The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki*, by Swami Venkatesananda, Albany, NY: New York State University Press, 1988))

> *"Valmiki, accompanied by his disciple, went towards the river for his noon bath. Just then he saw a hunter mercilessly kill a male crane while it was sporting with its female companion and heard the female's heart-rending cry. Overcome by pity and angered by the hunter's heartless cruelty, Valmiki uttered a curse: "For this sin, you will not live for very long." Reflecting on what he had just uttered, Valmiki said, "Fixed in métrical quarters, each with a like number of syllables, and fit for the accompaniment of stringed and percussion instruments, the utterance that I produced in this access of soka (grief), shall be called sloka (poetry)."*

Thereafter, Valmiki proceeded to compose the story of Ram in this poetry - *The Ramayana of Valmiki*.

- Why do you think this tragic event evoked poetry from Valmiki?
- What does this tell us about the South Asian attitude toward animals and nature?

**Procedure**

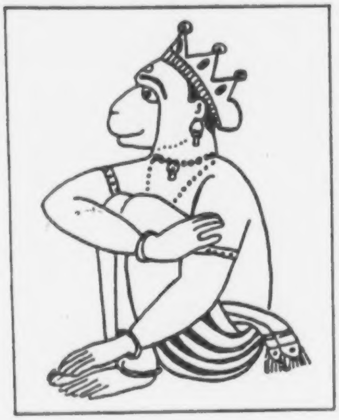
When you read *Ramayana*, you realize that animals and nature play a large part in the narrative. Discuss the roles played by the animals in the text.

- How is the forest depicted?
- How is Ram's enjoyment of the forest described?
- What is the symbolism of Jatayu, the vulture, giving up its life for Sita?
- How does Garuda, the divine eagle, magically cure Lakshmana?
- Why do people believe Hanuman has supernatural power and is the epitome of loyal service?
- In what other ways are animals and nature part of the *Ramayana* story?
- What do these examples tell us about the South Asian attitude toward animals and nature?

**Summary/Application**

Some of the world's most beautiful and inspiring art relates to animals and nature.

- Look for some photographs which would depict the South Asian attitude toward animals.
- If you look at South Asian posters, how do they reflect their attitudes about nature?
- Write a letter to the Sierra Club or World Wildlife Federation describing the how *Ramayana* reflects the South Asian attitudes toward nature and animals.



## UNIT 22, LESSON 2

**Focus Question: To What Extent do Hindu Religious Ideas Demonstrate a Respect for Nature?**

**Main Idea**

- To show the Hindu respect for all life deities inhabiting trees and plants.

**Performance Objectives: Students will be able to**

- identify the life forces in nature.
- discuss the Mother Goddess as the Earth Goddess.
- understand the Hindu respect for the law.

*This lesson can be conducted in several different ways. Three options are listed below. The first two would take approximately a class period each. Option #3 would take two class periods.*

### Option 1

Invite a member of the local Indian community to enact a *Puja* with students. In the discussion with students, focus on the following question:

- How is nature a critical part of this religious ceremony?

### Option 2

Show the video, *Holy Cow* (available from the South Asia Center, Syracuse University). Afterwards, discuss with students:

- How does the Hindu respect for cows reflect their attitude toward animals and nature?
- What are both the religious and material uses of cows?

### Option 3

Distribute **Worksheet 1: The Forest Goddess.**

- What else do we get from trees?
- If you wanted to protect the forest, what religious rules or activities would you create to do so?

Distribute **Worksheet 2: A Flowering Tree**.

- How does this story show us how love and nature is found in the folktales of South Asia?
- What does the story tell us about the Indian attitude toward trees?
- How does the story encourage respect and responsibility toward trees?

## To What Extent do Hindu Religious Ideas Demonstrate a Respect for Nature?

### Worksheet 1: Aranyani: Goddess of the Forest

*(Adapted from Vandana Shiva,* ***Staying Alive****, reprinted by permission, Zed Publication, 1989, p. 55)*

Forests have always been central to Indian civilization. They have been worshiped as Aranyani, the Goddess of the Forest, the source of life and fertility. The forest continuity has been viewed as a model for society. Here is a quote from the Indian philosopher/writer, Rabindranath Tagore:

> *"Indian civilization has been distinctive in locating its source of regeneration, material and intellectual, in the forest, not the city. India's best ideas have come where man was in communion with trees and rivers and lakes, away from the crowds. The peace of the forest has helped the intellectual evolution of man. Indian thinkers were surrounded by and linked to the life of the forest. The living forest was for them their shelter, their source of food. The intimate relationship between human life and living nature became the source of knowledge."*

The model of this is the Indian ascetic, the holy man, who makes his *ashram* in the forest. There he lives a simple life in harmony with nature. There he can meditate and finds inspiration for his meditations from nature itself.

The forest as the highest expression of the earth's fertility and productivity is symbolized in the form of the Earth Mother, Vana Durga, or the Tree Goddess. In Indian folk and tribal cultures, trees and forests are also worshiped as *Vana Devatas* or forest deities. The sacred tree serves as a symbol of the Earth Mother.

Sacred forests and sacred groves were created and maintained throughout India. As one Indian writer noted, "almost every hill-top is dedicated to some local deity and the trees on or about the spot are regarded with great respect so that nobody dare touch them. There is also a general impression among the people that everyone cutting a tree should plant another in its place."

### Questions

- What does this story tell us about the Indian attitude toward trees?
- How does the story encourage respect and responsibility toward trees?

## Worksheet 2: Folktales From India: A Flowering Tree

*(adapted from* ***Folktales From India****, by Ramanujan, A.K., Delhi: Penguin Books, 1993, pp.110-119)*

In a certain town, the king had two daughters and a son. His older daughter was married.

In the same town, there lived an old woman with her two daughters. She did menial jobs to feed and clothe and bring up her children. When the girls had reached puberty, the younger sister said one day, "Sister, I've been thinking of something. it's hard on Mother to work all day for our sakes. I want to help her. I will turn myself into a flowering tree. You can take the flowers and sell them for good money."

Amazed, the older sister asked, "How will you turn into a flowering tree?"

"I'll explain later. You first sweep and clean the entire house. Then take a bath, go to the well, and bring me two pitchers full of water, without touching them with your fingernails," said the younger sister.

The older sister listened to her carefully, swept and wiped and cleaned, took a bath, and brought two pitchers of water as the younger sister had told her.

Right in front of their house stood a tall tree. 'Me sister swept and wiped the ground under it, too. Both girls then went there, and the younger one said, "Sister, I'll sit under this tree and meditate. Then you pour the water from this pitcher all over my body. I'll turn into a flowering tree. Then you pluck as many flowers as you want, but do it without breaking a twig or tearing a leaf. When you're done, pour the water from the other pitcher over me, and I'll become a person again."

The younger sister sat down and meditated on God. The older one poured water from the first pitcher all over her sister. At once, her sister changed into a great flowering tree that seemed to stretch from earth to heaven. The older sister plucked the flowers carefully, without hurting a branch or twig or leaf. After she had enough to fill a basket or two, she emptied the second pitcher of water over the tree - and the tree became a human being again, and the younger sister stood in its place. She shook the water from her hair, and stood up. They both gathered the flowers in baskets and brought them home. The flowers had a wonderful fragrance. They wove them into garlands.

"Where shall I sell them?" asked the elder sister.

"Sister, why not take all of them to the king's palace? They will pay well. Mother is always doing such awful jobs for our sake. Let's pile up some money and surprise her," said the younger one.

So the older sister took the basketful of garlands before the king's palace and hawked her wares, crying, "Flowers, flowers, who wants flowers?"

The princess looked out and said, "Mother, Mother, the flowers smell wonderful. Buy me some."

"All right, call the flower girl," said the queen. They both looked at the flowers, and they were lovely. The queen asked, "How much do you want for these?"

"We are poor people. Give us whatever you wish," said the older sister. They gave her a handful of coins and bought all the garlands.

When the older sister came home with the money, the younger one said, "Sister, Sister, don't tell Mother. Hide it. Don't tell anyone."

They sold flowers like this for five days, and they had five handfuls of coins.

"Shall we show these to Mother?" asked the older sister.

"No, no, she'll get angry and beat us," said the other. The two girls were eager to make money.

One day the king's son saw the flowers. They smelled wonderful. He had never seen such flowers anywhere. "What flowers are these?" he wondered. "Where do they grow, on what kind of tree? Who brings them to the palace?"

He watched the girl who brought the flowers, and one day he followed her home to the old woman's house, but he couldn't find a single flowering tree anywhere. He was quite intrigued. On his way home he tired himself out thinking, "Where on earth do they get such flowers?"

Early the next morning, while it was still dark, the king's son went and hid himself in the tall tree in front of the old woman's house. That day, too, the girls swept and washed the space under the tree. As usual, the younger girl became the flowering tree, and after the older one had gently plucked all the flowers, the tree became a young woman again. The prince saw all this happen before his very eyes.

He came straight home and lay on his bed, face down. His father and mother came to find out what the matter was. He didn't speak a word. The miftister's son, his friend, came and asked him, "What happened? Did anyone say anything to hurt you? What do you want? You can tell me."

Then the prince told him, bit by bit, about the girl turning into a flowering tree. "Is that all?" said the minister's son, and reported it all to the king. The king called the minister, and sent for the old woman. She arrived, shaking with fear. She was dressed in old clothes and stood near the door. After much persuasion, she sat down. The king calmed her and softly asked her, "You have two girls at your place. Will you give us one?" The old woman's fear grew worse. "How does the king know about my daughters?" she thought. She found her voice with difficulty and stammered, "All right, master. For a poor woman like me, giving a daughter is not as great a thing, is it, as your asking for one?"

The king at once offered her *tombula* - betel leaf and betel nut - ceremonially on a silver platter, as a symbolic offer of betrothal. She was afraid to touch it. But the king forced it on her and sent her home.

Back home, she picked up a broom and beat her daughters. She scolded them: "You bitches, where have you been? The king is asking after you. Where did you go?"

The poor girls didn't understand what was happening. They stood there crying, "Mother, why are you beating us? Why are you scolding us?"

"Who else can I beat? Where did you go? How did the king hear about you?"

The old woman raged on. The terrified girls slowly confessed to what they had been doing-told her how the younger girl would turn into a flowering tree, how they would sell the flowers and hoard the money, hoping to surprise their mother. They showed her their five handfuls of coins.

"How can you do such things, with an elder like me sitting in the house? What's all this talk about human beings becoming trees? Who ever heard of it? Telling lies, too. Show me how you become a tree."

She screamed and beat them some more. Finally, to pacify her, the younger sister had to demonstrate it all, she became a tree and then returned to her normal human self, right before her mother's eyes.

Next day, the king's men came to the old woman's house and asked her to appear before the king. The old woman went and said, "Your Highness, what do you want of me?"

The king answered, "Tell us when we should set the date for the wedding."

"What can I say, Your Highness? We'll do as you wish," the old woman said, secretly glad by now.

The wedding arrangements began. The family made ritual designs on the wedding floor as large as the sky, and built a wedding canopy as large as the earth. All the relatives arrived. At an auspicious moment, the girl who knew how to become a flowering tree was given in marriage to the prince.

After the nuptial ceremony, the families left the couple alone together in a separate house. But he was aloof, and so was she. Two nights passed. Let him talk to me, thought she. Let her begin, thought he. So both groom and bride were silent.

On the third night, the girl wondered, "He hasn't uttered a word. Why did he marry me?" She asked him, aloud, "is it for this bliss you married me?"

He answered roughly, "I'll talk to you only if you do what I ask."

"Won't I do as my husband bids me? Tell me what you want."

"You know how to turn into a flowering tree, don't you? Let me see you do it. We can then sleep on flowers, and cover ourselves with them. That would be lovely," he said.

"My lord, I'm not a demon, I'm not a goddess. I'm an ordinary mortal like everyone else. Can a human being ever become a tree?" she said very humbly.

"I don't like all this lying and cheating. The other day I saw you become a beautiful tree. I saw you with my own eyes. If you don't become a tree for me, for whom will you do it?" he chided her.

The bride wiped a tear from her eyes with the end of her sari, and said,

"Don't be angry with me. If you insist so much, I'll do as you say. Bring two pitchers of water."

He brought them. She uttered chants over them. Meanwhile, he shut all the doors and all the windows. She said, "Remember, pluck all the flowers you want, but take care not to break a twig or tear a leaf."

Then she instructed him on how and when to pour the water, while she sat in the middle of the room, meditating on God. The prince poured one pitcherful of water over her. She turned into a flowering tree. The fragrance of the flowers filled the house. He plucked all the flowers he wanted, and then sprinkled water from the second pitcher all over the tree. It became his bride again. She shook her tresses and stood up smiling.

They spread the flowers, covered themselves with them, and went to bed. They did this again and again for several days. Every morning the couple threw out all the withered flowers from their window. The heap of flowers lay there like a hill.

The king's younger daughter saw the heap of withered flowers one day and said to the queen, "Look, Mother, Brother and Sister-in-Law wear and throw away a whole lot of flowers. The flowers they've thrown away are piled up like a hill. And they haven't given me even one."

The queen consoled her: "Don't be upset. We'll get them to give you some."

One day the prince had gone out somewhere. Then the princess (who had meanwhile spied and discovered the secret of the flowers) called all her friends and said, "Let's go to the swings in the *surahonne* grove. We'll take my sister-in-law; she'll turn into a flowering tree. If you all come, I'll give you flowers that smell wonderful."

Then she asked her mother's permission. The queen said, "Of course, do go. Who will say no to such things?"

The princess then said, "But I can't go alone. Send Sister-in-Law." Then get your brother's permission and take her."

The prince came in just then, and his sister asked him, "Brother, Brother , we're all going to the *surahonne* grove to play on our swings. Can Sister-in-Law come along?"

"It's not my wish that's important. Everything depends on Mother," he answered.

So she went back to the queen and complained, "Mother, if I ask Brother, he sends me to you. But you don't really want to send her, so you're giving me excuses. Is your daughter-in-law more important to you than your daughter?"

The queen rebuked her, saying, "Don't be rude. All right, take your sister-in-law with you. Take care of her and bring her back safely by evening."

Reluctantly, the queen sent her daughter-in-law with the girls.

They all went to the *surahonne* grove. They tied their swings to a big tree. Soon everyone was

playing merrily on the swings. Abruptly the princess stopped all the games, brought everyone down from the swings, and accosted her brother's wife: "Sister-in-Law, you can become a flowering tree, can't you? Look, no one here has any flowers for her hair."

The sister-in-law replied angrily, "Who told you such nonsense? Am I not another human being like you? Don't talk such crazy stuff."

The princess taunted her, "Oh, I know all about you. My friends have no flowers to wear. I ask my sister-in-law to become a tree and give us some flowers, and look how coy she acts. You don't want to become a tree for us. Do you do that only for your lovers?"

"*Che*, you're awful. My coming here was a mistake," said the sister-in-law sadly, and she agreed to become a tree.

She sent for two pitchers of water, uttered chants over them, instructed the girls on how and when to pour the water, and sat down to meditate. The silly girls didn't listen carefully. They poured the water on her indifferently, here and there. She turned into a tree, but only half a tree.

It was already evening, and it began to rain, with thunder and lightning. In their greed to get the flowers, the girls tore the leaves and broke the branches. They were in a hurry to get home. They poured the second pitcher of water at random and ran away. When the sister-in-law changed from a tree to a person again, she had no hands and feet. She had only half a body. She was a wounded carcass.

Somehow in that flurry of rainwater, she crawled and floated into a gutter. There she got stuck in a turning, a long way off from home.

Next morning, seven or eight cotton wagons were coming that way and a driver spotted a half-human thing groaning in the gutter. The first cart-driver said, "See what that noise is about."

The second one said, "Hey, let's get going. It may be the wind, or it may be some ghost, who knows?"

But the last cart-driver stopped his cart and took a look. There lay a shapeless mass, a body. Only the face was a beautiful woman's face. She wasn't wearing anything.

"*Ayyo,* some poor woman," he said in sorrow, and threw his turban cloth over her and carried her to his cart, paying no heed to the dirty banter of his fellows. Soon they came to a town. They stopped their carts there and lowered the Thing onto a ruined pavilion. Before they drove on, the cartdriver said, "Somebody may find you and feed you. You will survive." Then they drove on.

When the princess came home alone, the queen asked her, "Where's your sister-in-law? What will your brother say?" The girl answered casually, "Who knows? Didn't we all find our own way home? Who knows where she went?"

The queen panicked and tried to get the facts out of the girl. "*Ayyo!* You can't say such things. Your brother will be angry. Tell me what happened."

The girl said whatever came to her head. The queen found out nothing. She had a suspicion that her daughter had done something foolish. After waiting several hours, the prince talked to his mother.

"*Amma, amma.* "

"What is it, my son?"

"What has happened to my wife? She went with my sister to play on the swings, and never came back."

"O Rama! I thought she was in your bedroom all this time. Now you're asking me!"

"Oh, something terrible has happened to her," thought the prince. He went and lay down in grief. Five days passed, six days passed, fifteen days passed, but there was no news of his wife. They couldn't find her anywhere.

"Did the stupid girls push her into a tank? Did they throw her down a well? My sister never liked her. What did the foolish girls do?" He asked his parents and the servants. What could they say? They too were worried and full of fear. In disgust and despair, he changed into an ascetic's long robe and went out into the world. He just walked and walked, not caring where he went.

Meanwhile, the girl who was now a Thing somehow reached the town where her husband's elder sister had been given in marriage. Every time the palace servants and maids passed that way to fetch water, they would see her. They would say to each other, "She glows like a king's daughter." Then one of them couldn't stand it any longer and decided to tell the queen.

"*Amma, amma,* she looks very much like your younger brother's wife. Look through the seeing-glass and see for yourself"

The queen looked, and the face did seem strangely familiar. One of the maids suggested, "*Amma,* can I bring her to the palace. Shall I?"

The queen pooh-poohed this: "We'll have to serve her and feed her. Forget it..,

The next day again the maids mumbled and moaned, "She's very lovely. She'll be like a lamp in the palace. Can't we bring her here?"

"All right, all right, bring her if you wish. But you'll have to take care of her without neglecting palace work," ordered the queen.

They agreed and brought the Thing to the palace. They bathed her in oils, dressed her well, and sat her down at the palace door. Every day they applied medicines to her wounds and made her well. But they could not make her whole. She still had only half a body.

Now the prince wandered through many lands and ended up outside the gate of his older sister's palace. He looked like a crazy man. His beard and whiskers were wild. When the maids were fetching and carrying water, they saw him. They went back to the queen in the palace and said, "*Amma,* someone is sitting outside the gate, and he looks very much like your brother. Look through the seeing-glass and see for yourself "

Grumbling, the queen went to the terrace and looked through the seeing glass. She was surprised: "Yes, he does look remarkably like my brother. What's happened to him? Has he become a wandering ascetic? Impossible," she thought. She sent her maids down to bring him in. They said to him, "The queen wants to see you."

He brushed them aside. "Why would she want to see me?" he growled. "No, sir, she really wants to see you. Please come," they insisted and finally persuaded him to come in. The queen took a good look at him and knew it was really her brother.

She ordered the palace servants to heat up whole vats of oil and great vessels of steaming water for his baths. She served him and numbed him, for she knew he was her brother. She served new kinds of dinner each day, and brought him new styles of clothing. But whatever she did, he wouldn't speak a word to his older sister. He didn't even ask, "Who are you? Where am I?" though by this time, they both knew they were brother and sister.

The queen wondered, "Why doesn't he talk to me when I treat him so royally? What could be the reason? Could it be some witch's or demon's magic?"

After some days, she started sending one or another of her beautiful maids into his bedroom every night. She sent seven maids in seven days. The maids held his hands and caressed his body, and tried to rouse him from his stupor. But he didn't say a word or do a thing.

Finally, the maidservants got together and dressed up the Thing that sat at the palace door. With the permission of the disgusted queen, they left it on his bed. He neither looked up nor said anything. But that night, the Thing sat at his feet and pressed and massaged his legs with its stump of an arm. It moaned strangely. He got up once and looked at it. Then he stared at it for a few moments and realized it was really his lost wife. He asked her what had happened. She, who had no speech al these months, suddenly broke into words. She told him whose daughter she was, whose wife, and what had happened to her.

"What shall we do now?" he asked.

"Nothing much. We can only try. Bring me two pitchers of water, without touching them with your fingernails," she replied.

At once he brought her two pitchers of water without anyone's knowledge. She uttered chants over them and instructed him: "Pour the water from this pitcher over me, and I'll become a tree. Wherever there is a broken branch, set it right. Wherever a leaf is torn, bind it together. Then pour the water from the second pitcher over the tree."

Then she sat down and meditated.

He poured the water on her from the first pitcher. She became a tree. But the branches had been broken, the leaves had been torn. He carefully set each one right and bound them up, and gently poured the water from the second pitcher all over the tree. Now she became a whole human being again. She stood up, shaking the water from her hair, and fell at her husband's feet.

Then she went and woke up the queen, her sister-in-law, and touched her feet also. She told the astonished queen the whole story. The queen wept and embraced her. Then she treated the couple to all kinds of princely food and service and had then sit in the hall like bride and bride for a ritual celebration called *hase*. She kept them in her palace for several weeks, and then sent them home to her father's palace with cartloads of gifts.

The king was overjoyed at the return of his long-lost son and daughter-in-law. He met them at the city gates and took them home on an elephant *howdah* in a grand ceremonial procession through the city streets. At the palace, they told the king and the queen everything that had happened. Then the king had seven barrels of bumming lime poured into a great pit and threw his youngest daughter into it. All the people who saw it said to themselves, "After all, every wrong has its punishment."

## UNIT 22, LESSON 3

### Focus Question: How Did Gandhi Use the Hindu Respect for Life in his Political Movement?

### Main Idea

- Gandhi advocated village-based, non-industrial life styles.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- better understand Gandhi's politics.
- see the implications of village-based, non-industrial life styles.
- evaluate how Gandhi incorporated the Hindu respect for life in his politics.

### Teacher Background

*In the film,* ***Gandhi****, we saw a man who changed history. His tools were the strategy of non-violent civil disobedience, living simply with the people to understand and appreciate their needs, and adherence to moral truth. We also saw that Gandhi's vision of the goal of Indian independence was centered on the self-sufficiency of India's villages and the simple, but ample way of life they offered. What happened to Gandhi's legacy after independence? Did anyone continue to pursue this vision or was it judged naive and antiquated, out of touch with the demands of modernization?*

### Springboard

- Read the following quote to class. (*Reprinted from* ***Hugging the Trees****, by Thomas Weber, from "The Story of the Chipko Movement", Delhi, Penguin Books, 1987, p.24)*

> *"I am charmed with the natural scenery (in the Himalayan foothills) and bow my head in reverence to our ancestors for their sense of the beautiful in Nature, and for their foresight in investing beautiful manifestations of nature with a religious significance."*
>
> \- Mahatma Gandhi, 1915

- What does this quote tell us about Gandhi's attitude toward nature?
- How does Gandhi connect nature and religion? Do you agree with him?

### Procedure

- Distribute **Worksheet 3: Hugging the Trees**. Review responses with class.

  - Gandhi's model of development was not followed by the newly independent Indian government. Instead the government put the country's resources into large-scale industrial development based in the cities.

  - How did this policy effects you as a villager living in a forest area of the Himalayas?

### Summary/Application

✎ Write an editorial for your local paper on some environmental issue. Use the same arguments as did Gandhi.

## Worksheet 3: Hugging the Trees

*(Adapted from **Hugging the Trees** by Thomas Weber, New Delhi: Penguin India, 1987, pp. 30-32.)*

"For Gandhi, Indian *swaraj,* or Independence, meant far more than merely an India without the British. It meant a certain sort of India and a certain type of Indian. Until they were achieved, he believed, there was no complete independence."

"Gandhi's vision of independence was summed up in the word 'Ramarajya,' the 'Kingdom of God', where there were equal rights for princes and paupers, where even the lowliest person could get swift justice without elaborate and costly procedures, where inequalities which allowed some to roll in riches while the masses did not have enough to eat were abolished, and where sovereignty of the people was based on pure moral authority rather than on power."

On the day before his death Gandhi wrote what has become known as his 'last will and testament,' in which he said the Congress Party had outlived its usefulness and should be replaced by Lok Seva Sanghs, organizations for the service of the people. The job of these workers was to organize villages so as to make them self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts while educating the villagers in sanitation and hygiene. The *sarvodaya* (literally all rising, good of all) worker was to be an idealist, an example and a teacher.

The type of rural economic system that these workers were to help bring into being was one based on Intensive small-scale farming where manure was returned to the soil as fertilizer, where a proper balance of animal, human and plant life was achieved and where both human and animal power were protected against the onslaught of machinery as the price of social justice.

Gandhi said: "I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it is made, is foredoomed to failure."

The basic needs of the village were to be met by the village. This meant that villages were also to be responsible for small scale industries. Such industries were to complete a self-sufficient village-based economy, to provide needed employment and to revive old skills. If things could be made at the local level they should be. Gandhi had always believed that *satyagraha* was only one side of a coin. The other side was what he called the 'constructive programme.' It involved future leaders in the struggle against exploitation (in all its forms) by putting them in struggle with the masses.

Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi's spiritual heir, continued his experiments. In the early 1950s he walked the length and breadth of India requesting landowners to turn their surplus land over to landless peasants (the *Bhoodan*, or landgift, movement) and later he led the Gramdan (village gift) movement whereby whole villages pledged to pool resources and labor for everyone's benefit.

### Question

- What do you think are the advantages of village-based development?
- Would you be better off or worse off?
- What would you lack? What would you have?

## UNIT 22, LESSON 4

### Focus Question: Why Has Chipko Become an Important Symbol of Environmental Movements?

### Main Ideas

- It is important to understand the environmental idea of Chipko and how it has served as a model in the environmental movement.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- identify the qualities of the Chipko movement.
- discuss the role of Chipko in the over-all environmental issue.
- determine how Chipko has become a model for Indians.

### Teacher Background

*The Gandhian ideal, kept alive by the sarvodaya workers, combined with the native religious respect for nature and the survival needs of Himalayan women, led to the development of an environmental movement that has shaken the world,* ***chipko****, or "hugging the trees." The following excerpts will seek to answer why this movement arose, who was involved in it, and the methods the movement used to spread its message.*

### Springboard

All over the world today there are struggles to retain the forests and the animals.

- What examples can you give of this world-wide concern?
- Who has favored these movements?
- Who has opposed them?

(Students can be reminded of the recent struggles in the Pacific Northwest over saving the forests and the spotted owl. The tactics used by protestors included "hugging the trees" to prevent loggers from cutting the trees. This non-violent method of protest was previously used in Japan and India from which the inspiration for this method of protest has come.)

### Procedure

- This can be conducted as a Jigsaw cooperative learning activity, or as a succession of lessons. Group assignments are listed below:

**Worksheet 1: Why Chipko?**
**Worksheet 2: "The Story of Amrita Devi's Sacrifice"**
**Worksheet 3: Chipko Folksong**
**Worksheet 4: Women and Chipko**

For all the assignments, ask the students to answer the following questions:

- Make a brief list of the effects of deforestation of the Himalaya. Explain these effects to the other groups.
- How do these readings tell us about the reaction of the Indian people to environmental destruction?

▸ Have students complete the following "organizer".

## Chipko Movement

| EFFECTS OF | POSSIBLE SOLUTION |
|---|---|
| Deforestation | |
| Floods | |
| Human Involvement | |
| Role of Women | |

**Summary/Application**
Chipko is similar to other environmental groups around the world.

▸ Research a prominent environmental group (e.g. - Sierra Club, National Environmental Defense Council, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, etc.). Examine their program and demands and compare to Chipko Movement.

## Why Has Chipko Become an Important Symbol of Environmental Movements?

### Worksheet 1: Why Chipko?

*(Adapted from **Hugging the Trees** by Thomas Weber, New Delhi: Penguin India, 1987, pp. 61-63)*

Chipko arose first of all as a response to a critical environmental and economic crisis in the Himalaya. Since the 1840s, under British rule, the forests of the Himalayas had come under commercial exploitation. Decimation of the forests continued to accelerate throughout the 20th Century, even after independence as industrialization became a major goal of the new government.

What were the effects of deforestation of the Himalaya? One major effect was devastating flooding of mountain villages and even into the Indo-Gangetic plains. The Himalayas are the source of the major rivers of India. The monsoons bring torrential rains which, in the absence of effective forest cover, dislodge massive amounts of soil and gravel. Some of the effects are described in these excerpts:

> "A torrential downpour during the 1970 monsoon left an unprecedented trail of destruction in its wake. As the Alaknanda tributaries overflowed their banks, the village of Belakuchi was swept away: 55 people, 142 head of cattle, 6 motor bridges, 16 pedestrian bridges, 25 buses, 604 houses, 47 water mills, 27 cowsheds and 4 agricultural machines were destroyed. 101 villages were marooned and 500 acres of standing paddy crops were flooded and, as waters subsided, parts of it were caked in a two metre thick layer, of silt. 300 km downstream, the Upper Ganga canal was choked for 10 km with a three metre deposit of silt, denying irrigation to large parts of the state of western Uttar Pradesh for 6 months. It cost Rs. 1 crore to clean up the results of this flood, and crop and other losses were estimated at Rs. 62 lakhs."
>
> "The amazed residents of Uttarkashi, on the morning of 6 August 1978, noticed that the usually monsoon-rain swollen Bhagirathi river was receding at an alarming rate. This indicated that landslides had dammed the river further upstream. At about 1.30 a.m., fifty km away, a three by one km mountain side had fallen into a Bhagirathi tributary, blocking its flow. Silt and rubble from this slide also blocked the flow of the Bhagirathi itself near the confluence of the streams. Further slides eventually left a 100-metre-high dam blocking the river, with a 4km-long artificial lake backed up behind it. For thirteen hours the lake continued to grow until, at about four p.m., the water found its way around the barrier. One hour later the, flood had reached Uttarkashi itself. Several houses and the road connecting-Uttarkashi to the plains were washed away. In the-holy town itself, a pilgrim rest house and its occupants were swept away. The destruction continued for a further seventy km downstream to the town of Tehri.
>
> "Had the artificial lake burst its way through the rubble barrier, rather than flowing around it, the whole of the Gangetic plain as far as Allahabad, 800 km downstream, would have been threatened with flooding. It was widely assumed that the danger passed with the flood of the 6th, but as All India Radio was assuring people of their safety, the overlooked lake behind the original landslide burst through its barrier. The village of Gangnani, forty-five km upstream from Uttarkashi was destroyed.... Three weeks later, flooding of the Yamuna tributaries caused a destructive deluge that reached Delhi."

Another effect of deforestation was the destruction of the way of life of the people of the Himalayas. Each day women had to go further to find firewood and fodder. This task eventually became a day-long endeavor. Village industries which utilized the wood of the forest for making such things as agricultural implements found themselves denied access in favor of the commercial forestry interests. Men were forced to migrate to the cities and Indo-Gangetic plains looking for work. Dire poverty and unemployment, accompanied by alcoholism, plagued the mountain villages.

## Why Has Chipko Become an Important Symbol of Environmental Movements?

### Worksheet 2: The Story of Amrita Devi's Sacrifice

*(reprinted from Thomas Weber,* ***Hugging The Trees****, New Delhi: Penguin India, 1987, p. 91-93)*

In order to give people courage to fight for their trees, Chipko leaders fasted and recounted the story of previous actions where hardship and overwhelming odds were overcome in the battle for trees. One of the grandest of these stories is that of the Bishnoi woman, Amrita Devi.

The Bishnoi sect was founded in 1485 by Jambhoji, the son of a village headman. Jambhoji had witnessed the hardships caused by an extended drought and the resultant deforestation in his region of Rajasthan. He had a vision of men quarreling with nature as the cause of the hard times. He laid down twenty-nine tenets of the Bishnoi faith which are still followed today. The rules include a prohibition on the cutting of green trees and a ban on the killing of animals. As a result, trees and wildlife flourished in Bishnoi areas and the soil became increasingly fertile.

At times, however, the Bishnois had to sacrifice their lives to fulfill the commandments of their faith. The most inspiring example of such a sacrifice is the story of Amrita Devi.

The Bishnois had been taught from childhood to love trees; children had their own special trees that they would regularly talk to and hug. One day in 1731 the Maharaja's (ruler's) axemen arrived to fetch wood for the kiln that would be used to build a new palace. Amrita Devi explained the religion of the Bishnoi to the axemen, but they were unmoved. Amrita Devi then hugged the first tree marked for fell-in, saying "a chopped head is cheaper than a felled tree." She was cut through by the axemen. Her place was taken in turn by her three daughters who were also brutally killed. As the axemen withdrew to gather reinforcements, the Bishnoi villagers also sent out a call for assistance to the eighty-four surrounding Bishnoi villages.

When the axemen returned there was a major confrontation. The leader of the axemen warned the villagers that if they continued to resist, the axe would fall upon then also. But the Bishnois held firm. By the end of the day a further 359 people (294 men and 69 women) from forty-nine different villages had been butchered. Whole families had been wiped out.

The axemen had managed to secure only one-third of the required timber and the enraged Maharaja demanded an explanation. When he heard the ghastly story of the 363 villagers who had sacrificed their lives in order to prevent the work of the axemen from continuing, he immediately ordered a stop to the work on the palace and set out to visit the scene of destruction. As the full realization of what had happened impressed itself upon him, the fiery-tempered Maharaja underwent a change of heart. He apologized to the villagers and pledged that in the future the Bishnois would never again be called upon to provide timber, that no tree would be out and that there would be no hunting permitted around Bishnoi villages.

## Why Has Chipko Become an Important Symbol of Environmental Movements?

### Worksheet 3: A Chipko Folksong

*(reprinted from **Hugging the Trees**, by Thomas Weber, New Delhi: Penguin India, 1987, p. 89-90)*

The most effective method for spreading the message of Chipko among illiterate villagers was folksongs. Songs were made explaining the importance of trees with the chorus 'Do not cut, do not out, protect trees'. Other songs were about afforestation and talked about trees being equal to ten sons. They listed the gifts of a tree as oxygen, water, soil, energy, food, cloth, shelter, medicines, fodder and shade.

The folksongs songs were spread through schoolchildren who were taught the tunes by singers or through tapes. Bahuguna, an internationally-known leader of Chipko, claimed that "more than fifty per cent of credit for the popularity of this movement goes to the folksingers, especially to Sri Ghanshyam Sailani," a long-time Chipko activist. Sailini wrote the following song.

### The Appeal by a Tree

I have been standing for ages,
I wish to live for you.
Do not chop me, I am yours.
I wish to give you something in future.
I am milk and water for you.
I am thick shade and showers.
I manufacture soil and manure.
I wish to give you foodgrains.
Some of my kind bear fruits.
They ripen for you.
I wish to ripen with sweetness.
I wish to bow down for you.
I am the pleasant season.
I am spring. I am rains.
I am with Earth and life.
I am everything for you.
Do not cut me, I have life
I feel pain, so my name is tree.
Rolling of logs will create landslides
Remember, I stand on slopes and below is the village.
Where we were destroyed,
Dust is flying there.
The hill tops have become barren.
All the water sources have been dried up.
Do not cut us, save us.
Plant us, decorate the Earth.
What is ours, everything is yours.
Leave something for posterity.
Such is the Chipko movement.

## Worksheet 4: Women And CHIPKO

*(Reprinted by permission from* ***Cold Hearths and Barren Slopes****, Bina Agarwal, Woman of Uttarkhand hills, New Delhi, India: Kali for Women, p.24).*

"When we were young, we used to go to the forest early in the morning without eating anything. There we would eat plenty of berries and wild fruits... drink the cold sweet (water) of the *Banj* (oak) roots.... In a short while we would gather all the fodder and firewood we needed, rest under the shade of some huge tree and then go home. Now, with the going of the trees, everything else has gone too."

The transformation in the life of this Uttarkhand hills woman is mirrored all over India and the Third World. Trees are essential to the survival of rural communities. They are used for food, fodder for cattle, fuel, and fertilizer for the soil. The indigenous variety of species, such as oak, meet these needs. Eucalyptus and pine trees, imported and grown commercially in the last 25 years in place of indigenous varieties, offer none of these uses.

Massive deforestation has especially impacted women because they are the ones who gather and cut tree leaves for fodder and branches for cooking fuel. Contrast the quote above with the chart below.

**Table 5: Time taken and distance traveled for firewood collection by regions**

| Country | Region | Year of Data | Time taken | Firewood distance Collection | Data Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Asia - Nepal** | Tinan hills | 1978 | 3hr/day | n.a. | Stone 1982 |
| | Pangua hills | late 1970s | 4-5hr/bundle | n.a. | Bajracharya |
| | n.a. | n.a. | .62/hr/day | n.a. | Acharya and Bennett |
| **India** | Chamoli hills<br>(a) Dwing | 1982 | 5hr/day | over 5km | Swaminathan |
| | (b) Pakhi | 1982 | 4hr/day | over 3km | " |
| | Madhya Pradesh (plains) | 1980 | 1-2x/week | 5km | |
| | Kumaon Hills | 1982 | 3days/week | 5-7km | |
| | Karnataka (plains) | n.a. | 1hr/day | 5.4km/trip | |
| | Garwhal Hills | n.a. | 5hr/day | 10km | Agarwal (83) |

Notes:* Firewood is noted to be collected principally by women and children in all the studies listed, with the exception of Java where the labour put in is primarily by men.

> "In some villages of Gujarat, India, where the surrounding forests have been completely denuded, women spend long hours collecting weeds and shrubs and digging out the roots of trees,"

Unable to contend with the growing hardship of their lives, some young women have been committing suicide.

The scarcity of woodfuel has led to the use of cow dung for fuel instead of as fertilizer, which undermines agricultural productivity. In other instances it has lead to malnourishment and hunger because people are unable to cook their food.

In addition, deforestation lowers the water table, making it much more difficult and time consuming for women to obtain water. (Agarwal, p.24). And in an attempt to save scarce firewood, women spend more time cooking over low-burning fires (p.21).

Two women disciples of Gandhi played initiating roles in the Chipko movement. After Gandhi's death, Mira Behn and Sarala Behn started ashrans in the Himalaya to empower the hill women to deal with the ecological crisis facing them. It is not surprising that these *sarvodaya* workers found ready listeners in the womenfolk of the Himalaya.

The women's struggle to save the forests from exploitation even led them to challenge their men. In 1977 in Adwani, Bachni Devi led a struggle to save the local forests against her husband, the headman who had the contract for the forest's destruction. The forest officials confronted the women protesters at Adwani, saying, "You foolish women, how can you who prevent felling know the value of the forest? Do you know what forests bear? They produce profit and resin and timber." The women responded, singing:

What do the forests bear?
Soil, water and pure air.
Soil, water and pure air
Sustain the earth and all she bears.

The message of the women of Chipko has been an inspiration not only to communities throughout India, but to environmentalists all over the world.

**Questions**

- Why were women central to this movement?
- Describe the daily activities of these women's lives
- In what different ways were trees essential to survival?
- Describe how this woman's life has changed as a result of "the going of the trees."
- What is average amount of time spent by Indian women today on gathering woodfuel?
- What is average distance an Indian woman must travel today to obtain this woodfuel?

## UNIT 23, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How Can We Better Understand Variations in the Ramayana by Knowing India's Geography and Cultural Regions?

### Major Ideas

- Rama's journey takes him across India and can give us insight into Indian geography.
- The Ramayana is performed differently in different regions of India.
- The Ramayana contains different values in different parts of India.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to

- Discuss the geography of India.
- Gain some understanding of cultural variation in India and the U.S.

### Teacher Background

*The subcontinent of India is as vast and varied as that of Europe. The Ramayana is performed throughout this region, but in markedly different ways in different regions. These differences are both textual and performative. Often too, the ideas of northern India are taught as THE India, when in fact southern India has contributed in important ways to Indian culture.*

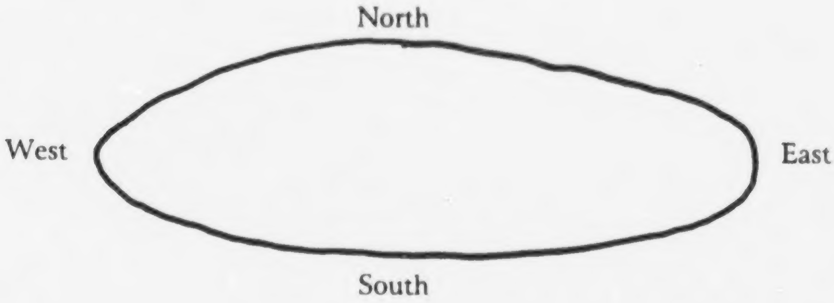
*In this lesson, students are first introduced to the geography of India through the lens of Rama's journey from Ayodhya to Lanka. Then they are introduced to cultural differences through viewing Part 2 of the Spotlight on the Ramayana video and through reading brief sections of a northern and southern version of the Ramayana. This lesson could be used in conjunction with UNIT 16 on puberty rituals, where north-south differences are also demonstrated, or with lessons in* ***A South Asia Curriculum: Teaching about India****, published by The American Forum, 1994.*

### Springboard

We all carry conceptions about regional differences in our own culture.

- What are regional stereotypes in the US?

- Ask students to make a semantic map of the physical differences of regions in the US:



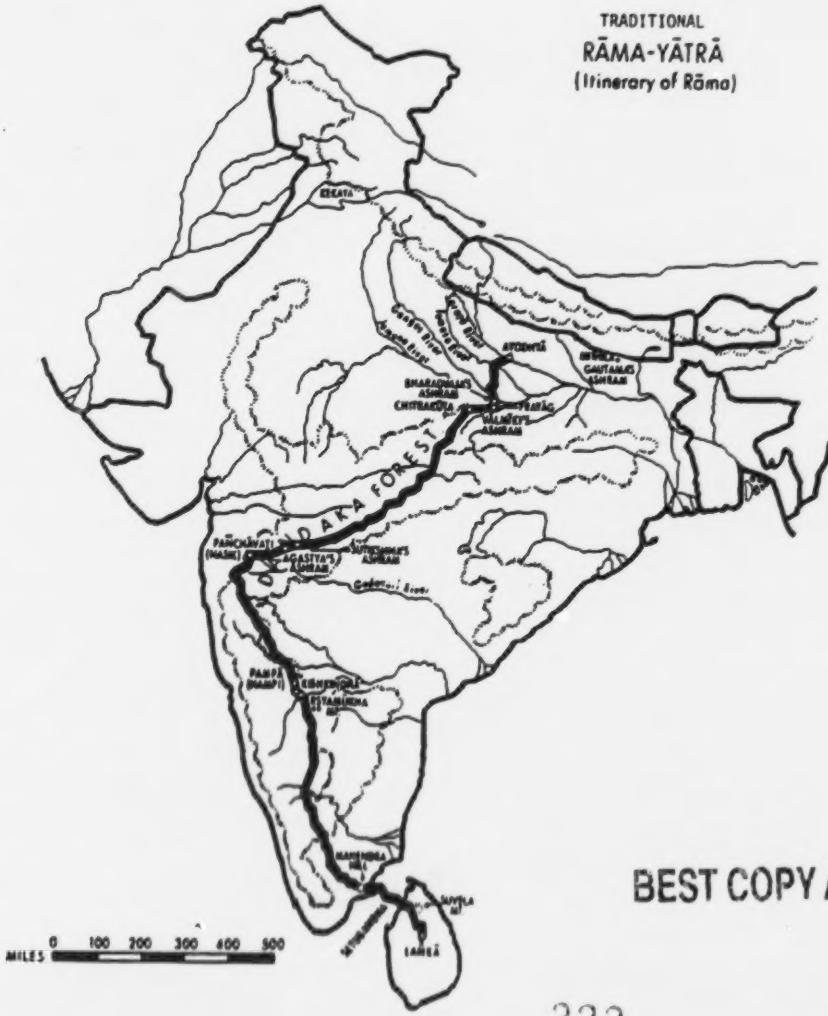
Procedure: Show lesson 6 from the video, *Spotlight on Ramayana*, accompanied by a **Physical Map of India** found in the front of this curriculum guide.

**Discussion**

- What are the major physical differences in India?
- How would you characterize India?

▸ Ask students to repeat the semantic map, this time for the physical characteristics of regions of India. (Re-show the video piece if necessary.)

▸ Now show Part 2 of the video. The performance pieces a, b and d are from the north; piece c is from the south. Ask students to list features of northern and southern performances.


TRADITIONAL
RĀMA-YĀTRĀ
(Itinerary of Rāma)

KEKAYA
AYODHYĀ
GAUTAMA'S ASHRAM
BHARADVAJA'S ASHRAM
CHITRAKŪTA
PRAYĀG
VALMĪKI'S ASHRAM
DANDAKA FOREST
PAÑCHAVATI (NASIK)
AGASTYA'S ASHRAM
SUTIKSHNA'S ASHRAM
Godavari River
PAMPĀ (HAMPI)
MAHENDRA HILL
LANKĀ
MILES
0
100
200
300
400
500

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### Teacher Background

*The Ramayana as written in northern and southern India carries connotations and values from those two regions. The ideas most critical to evaluating the following readings concern women and the hero Ravana. Women in southern India are valued more strongly than they are in the north. They play a greater role in agriculture, are not as rigidly confined to their courtyards and homes, have their sexuality celebrated in puberty rituals, and are generally treated better than in the north. This difference emerges in Ravana's treatment of Sita in these two readings. Valmiki allegedly wrote the Ramayana two centuries before the Christian era in Sanskrit in northern India. His text makes Ravana truly wicked and has him treat Sita equally badly. The second excerpt, from R.K. Narayan, was written in the later quarter of the 20th century and is based on a South India version written about 800 AD in Tamil. Here Ravana falls deeply in love with Sita and admires her beauty. Moreover, his treatment of her is much gentler than in Valmiki version. Note too that in the Valmiki version, Sita addresses Lakshmana as a devotee of Rama while in Narayan's version she calls him brother. These differences mark major differences in northern and southern versions of this story: in the north, Ravana has no redeeming qualities while in the south, he is sometimes even made the hero, but always abducts Sita lovingly, because he has fallen in love with her.*

### Springboard

▸ Repeat the semantic mapping developed yesterday, but for regional cultural differences, not physical ones. Ask students to reflect the fact that different regions value different things, whether foods, behaviors of women, housing styles, language, etc.

### Procedure

▸ Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each student copies of **Worksheet 1: The Abduction of Sita** and **Worksheet 2: The Abduction of Sita**. Ask each group to read the texts and then discuss their differences. Direct them to focus on Ravana and Sita.

When the class is reunited, ask why there might be different versions of the story.

- Why might southerners make Ravana more of a hero?
- Where is political power located in India?
- Where have the leaders of India usually come from?
- Ask them to briefly list cultural differences that exist between north and south India.

### Summary/Application

✎ Write an essay that looks at how some event in the US is portrayed differently by region. How, for example, is Christmas celebrated in Florida or Puerto Rico versus New York? Have a brief class brainstorming session to aid students in developing an idea.

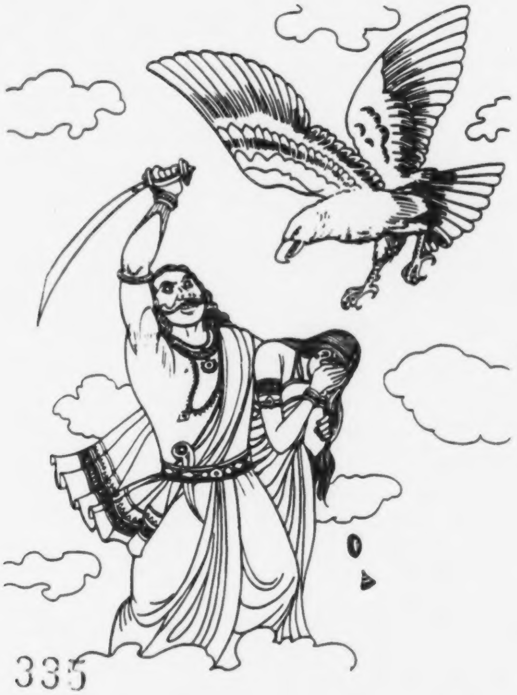
## How Can We Better Understand Variations in the Ramayana by Knowing India's Geography and Cultural Regions?

### Worksheet 1: The Abduction of Sita

*(The Concise Ramayana of Valmiki, Swami Venkatesananda, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1988, pp.156-57)*

Ravanna made his body enormously big and said to Sita: "You do not realize what a mighty person I am. I can step out into space, and lift up the earth with my arms; I can drink up the waters of the oceans; I can kill death itself. I can shoot a missile and bring the sun down. Look at the size of my body." As he expanded his form, Sita turned her face away from him. He resumed his original form with ten heads and twenty arms. Again he spoke to Sita: "Would you not like to be renowned in the three worlds? Then marry me. And I promise that I shall do nothing to displease you. Give up all thoughts of that mortal and unsuccessful Rama."

Ravana did not wait for an answer. Seizing Sita by her hair and lifting her up with his arm, he left the hermitage. Instantly the golden space vehicle appeared in front of him. He ascended it along with Sita. Sita cried aloud, "O Rama." As she was being carried away, she wailed aloud, "O Lakshmana, who is ever devoted to the elder brother, do you not know that I am being carried away by Ravana?" To Ravana she said, "Oh evil demon, surely you will reap the fruits of your evil action but they do not manifest immediately." She said as if to herself, "surely, Kaikeyi would be happy today." She said to the trees, to the river, to the deities dwelling in the forest, to the animals and birds, "Pray tell Rama that I have been carried away by the wicked Ravana."



## How Can We Better Understand Variations in the Ramayana by Knowing India's Geography and Cultural Regions?

### Worksheet 1a: The Abduction of Sita

*(The Ramayana, R.K. Narayan, Penguin Books, India 1993, pp.92-93.)*

Ravana said, "For your stupid statement, I would have crushed and eaten you, except for the fact that you are a woman and I want you and will die if I don't have you. Oh, swanlike one, my ten heads have never bowed to any god in the world. But I will take off my crowns and touch your feet with my brow. Only be my queen and command me what to do."

Sita covered her ears with her hands. "How dare you speak thus! I am not afraid to lose my life, but if you wish to save yours, run and hide before Rama sees you."

"Rama's arrows cannot touch me; you could as well expect a mountain to split at the touch of a straw," Ravana said. "Be kind to me. I am dying for your love. I will give you a position greater than anything a goddess can have. Have consideration. Have mercy. I prostrate myself before you."

When Ravana fell to the floor, Sita recoiled and started weeping aloud, "O my lord! 0 brother Lakshmana, come and help me."

At this, Ravana, remembering an ancient curse that if he touched any woman without her consent he would die that instant dug the ground under Sita's feet, lifted off with her, placed it in his chariot, and sped away.

Sita fainted, revived, desperately tried to jump off the chariot, cried, lamented, called upon the trees, birds and animals and the fairies of the woods to bear her witness and report her plight to Rama, and finally cursed Ravana as a coward and a trickster, who had adopted treacherous means only because he was afraid of Rama; otherwise would he not have faced Rama and fought him? Ravana only treated her words as a great joke and laughed at her. "You think too highly of Rama, but I don't. I do not care to fight him because it is beneath our dignity to confront a mere human being."

## UNIT 24, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: How Are the Various Tellings of the Ramayana Shaped by Time? How Do They, in Turn, Hope to Change the Times, that is, Influence Current Dominant Values, Institutions, or Principles of Ideal Behavior?

### Major Ideas

- "The *Ramayana* is like a language, you can use it to say many things." (V. Narayan Rao)
- What the *Ramayana* has been used to say depends on who is telling it and at what historical time.
- To contextualize a particular telling of the *Ramayana*, at a historical moment, some of the factors that are important are:
    - The sex, caste, class, region of the teller-performer-author
    - The political and economic position of those telling and their relationship to those in power
    - The intended audience
    - The wider societal forces of change at work-both within South Asia and globally
    - The availability of new literary idioms
    - The development of new forms or technologies of communication

### Performance Objectives

- Students will be able to move beyond "the *Ramayana* as literature/good story" or its "universal relevance" to see the *Ramayana* as historical, that is, socially produced knowledge. They will be able to link cultural production (whether text or performance) to wider societal structures (sex, caste, class) and forces of change in South Asia (Mughal conquest, colonialism, rejection of north Indian domination and Brahmanism, nationalism, feminism) and globally.

### Teacher Background

*Many Ramayanas are told, sung, acted, danced, performed, read, filmed, and serialized for T.V. throughout India. In fact, there have always been many tellings of the Ramayana which have refashioned and/or opposed the "original" telling associated with Valmiki (which is the telling on which the introductory piece and the video accompanying this curriculum guide are based).*

*Endowing Valmiki with unquestioned authorship and "his" telling of the Ramayana with overwhelming centrality is problematic for two reasons. First, Valmiki himself often becomes part of the legend of the Ramayana. In its many tellings there are several Valmikis and each plays the role that is suitable to the purpose of that particular telling. Thus, there is the Valmiki of the "great religious text" who by telling it invents poetry itself and has access to the Gods. In this telling, for the text to be great, and, worthy of worship, its author too must be venerated and infallible. In women's tellings of the Ramayana, in contrast, Valmiki becomes the biased biographer of Rama who denied Sita her legitimate place in the epic. Or, in marxist feminist tellings of the Ramayana, Valmiki becomes the embodiment of male upper castes and classes producing an ideology that serves to enslave women, lower castes, and the laboring classes.*

*A second reason why the adoption of one telling of the Ramayana must be questioned is because it plays* *into the Western tendency to conflate India in time and space. By simultaneously framing the Ramayana both as a text several thousands of years old, and as an accurate depiction of Indian culture today, India itself is rendered "pre-modern" and timeless. In contrast, of course, is a "modern" and "civilized" U.S. and Western Europe. In addition, all India is homogenized as one space, with no room to acknowledge the uneven development of different regions in different historic periods. This portrayal is particularly troublesome because according to it the West progresses and modernizes while India (and the rest of the non-West) remain stagnant, unchanging, and traditional; these processes are presented as being "natural". The West and the non-West, then, are made out to be completely separate entities with the emphasis on what divides them. The essential reason for difference, moreover, is deemed to be precisely in the realm of culture (which the Ramayana is emblematic of). "Progress", in this process, becomes possible only through the diffusion of superior Western cultural ideas and values to the non-West.*

*An alternate reading of history recognizes what has historically linked the West and India (non-West): trade, migration, war, colonization, disease, racism and imperialism. This view explains the material development of the West at the cost of the non-West and rather than treating cultures, whether Western or non-Western, as transhistorical invariants, links them to wider forces of change. The Ramayana in its various tellings then becomes understandable as a cultural product that must be contextualized both in time and space.*

### Springboard

▸ Students are asked to tell two or more tellings of the "same" history/story:

- Columbus' voyage of 1492 from the point of view the West and native American populations;
- Jefferson's employment of slaves on his Monticello estate as he penned the Declaration of Independence from the perspective of Jefferson and the men and women who he owned;
- the Holocaust from the point of view of Jewish survivors and neo-Nazis;
- the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan and the Enola Gay exhibition at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum from the perspective of U.S. veterans and the Japanese relatives of Hiroshima/Nagasaki victims.

▸ Teacher will record responses on the board and show how what one recognizes as history changes with time and context.

### Procedure

It is assumed that students would have read and familiarized themselves with Valmiki's version of the story either from the curriculum or R.K. Narayan. This lesson will work best if combined with a social studies unit on the history of South Asia that covers the Moghul conquest of India.

▸ Students will read the *Ramayana* story in the curriculum guide or R.K. Narayan's and discuss how it deals with the problems of kingship. Students are given time to answer the following questions:

- What is King Dasharata worried about?
- Why is not having a son and heir worrisome for a king?

- Why does Kaikeyi want Bharata to be king?
- Why can't Dasharata refuse Kaikeyi?
- Why can't Rama refuse to be banished?
- Why does Rama refuse to take Sita back unless she can proves she is pure?
- What is the role of the Brahmins-sages, Vishwamitra and Vasishta, in the *Ramayana*?
- How do they help the kings in the story? How do the kings help the Brahmins?
- What do the ordinary people in the story do?

▸ Teacher distributes **Worksheet 2a** to half the class and **Worksheet 2b** to half the class. Students are given time to read and to think about the questions at the bottom of each worksheet.

▸ Teacher then leads a combined activity:

**On the Ramayanas...**

- Which upper castes and classes were the re-tellings of the *Ramayana* representing?
- How had their position been changed by Mughal rule?
- What were the major changes in the story?
- Why were they important at that time?
- If the *Ramayana* was being re-written in colonial America what might the hierarchical relationships modeled in it have served to justify?
- What if it was written by slave-owners? Or by pro-monarchy, pro-British sympathizers?

## How Did the Mughal Conquest of India from the Middle of the 15th Century till the Middle of the 17th Century Effect and Change the Ramayana?

### Worksheet 1a

The version of the *Ramayana* you read and analyzed in Worksheet 1 was written at a time, around 2500 years ago, when kings and the problems of kingship were new and urgent. That is why the text tries to address these themes. Brahmins, as the advisors and scribes of kings, had an interest in portraying themselves as wise and knowledgeable in solving the problems of kingship. By the 16th century, however, the north of India was under Moghul rule and the Brahmins no longer strongly influenced ruling. In re-writing the *Ramayana* to make it relevant to the new times the Brahmins made Rama into a flawless, absolute, all powerful God. All the characters in the new *Ramayanas* become the devotees of God. Even Ravana in these versions of the *Ramayana* is Rama's devotee in disguise who is too impatient to reach him by the slower route of service and chooses the shorter route of conflict instead. The new relationship between Rama and his devotees in the *Ramayana*, that between master and slave, can be recognized as a model for the hierarchical and unequal relationship between Brahmins and all other lower castes and between men and women.

### Questions

- How were the upper classes and castes effected by Mughal rule?
- How did they react? What did they want changed?
- How did they retell the Ramayana story for their own purposes?

## How Did the Mughal Conquest of India From the Middle of the 15th Century till the Middle of the 17th Century Effect and Change the Ramayana?

### Worksheet 1b

The version of the *Ramayana* you read and analyzed in Worksheet 1 was written at a time when many large and small kingdoms existed all over India. These kings, nobles, warriors, were displaced by the Mughals and reduced to having less power and doing less important work. In tellings of the *Ramayana* written during Mughal rule the story is told to indirectly criticize the Mughals and raise hopes for their overthrow so that the "legitimate" kings can be restored to glory.

In one telling, by Eknath in the 1570s, Ravana imprisons all the gods and they are miserable. Indra, the king of the Gods has to bear Ravana's staff, the Moon god has to hold an umbrella over him, the nine planet gods are locked up and not allowed to roam the skies, Ganesha, the remover of obstacles, is made to rear donkeys, and the god of fire has to wash Ravana's dirty clothes. Rama is born to set the gods free from bondage. When Hanuman goes to Lanka to search for Sita he finds things in turmoil.

Different castes are working in professions different to the ones they are supposed to be in and doing all kinds of immoral things. So, Brahmins, who are supposed to be humble are arrogant; Kshatriyas, who are supposed to be fighters are afraid of death, Vaishyas, who are supposed to be fair merchants are mercenaries, and the various Sudra or service castes, like goldsmiths, tailors, money-lenders are all cheating their customers. The Rama of this story, described as "protector of cows and brahmins", is meant to fight and destroy Ravana and this topsy-turvy state of affairs.

> .....we will cut off the fetters that bind the gods,
> and raise the banner of Ramrajya, the kingdom of god.
> In this way we will put an end
> to the miseries of the world,
> and fill it happiness,
> so that the whole universe
> resounds with the name of Rama.

### Questions

- How were the upper classes and castes effected by Mughal rule?
- How did they react?
- What did they want changed?
- How did they retell the *Ramayana* story for their own purposes?

## UNIT 24, LESSON 2

**Focus Question: How Did British Colonialism (a) Change Relationships Between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, (b) Transform ideas of what it was to be modern, and (c) Introduce New Forms and Technologies of Communication, Like Printing Presses? How Did These Effect the *Ramayana*?**

### Procedure

- Teacher distributes **Worksheet 2** to everyone, **Worksheet 3a** to half the class and **Worksheet 3b** to the other half. Students are given time to put up skits for the other half.

- Then everyone tries to make sense of them in a teacher-led discussion:

**On the Ramayanas...**

- How do these plays criticize Rama? Brahmins?
- How do they portray Ravana? non-Brahmins? southerners?
- How do they portray Sita? men?

**More generally...**

- Can you think of a story or "fact" you have heard whose purpose is to justify hierarchy-either between whites and non-whites or between kings and ordinary people or between men and women? How would you change it?

**On medium of communication...**

- How did the recording of oral histories in books and movies, like *Roots*, change who could speak and to whom? What impact do you think this has had on you?

## How Did British Colonialism (a) Change Relationships Between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, (b) Transform Ideas of What it Was to be Modern, and (c) Introduce New Forms and Technologies of Communication, like Printing Presses? How Did These Effect the Ramayana?

### Worksheet 2

The British began their relationship with India, as did other European countries, as traders of spices and muslins. All though initially many independent traders were involved in this activity, the East India Company was set up to consolidate the position of the British against the Portuguese and the French. In 1857, the trading company was replaced by the British government and India was declared a British territory.

In southern India, where the impact of Mughal rule had always been weakest, the relationships between brahmins and non-brahmins were in a state of turmoil. Earlier, brahmins had sung the praises of lower caste peasant kings in the south and in return been fed by them. Lower caste peasant kings had needed the higher caste brahmins to spread the word that they were indeed legitimate rulers. With the British as the new kings, however, the brahmins quickly slipped into a new role: that of mediators between the British and the ruled. Having always been the most educated of castes, they were the first to get educated in the new ways and enter the British-run civil services. The landowning peasant castes, in contrast, were displaced from their positions at the top of the village hierarchy and, as large numbers moved to the cities, had to renegotiate their place in a new urban hierarchy that tended to favor the brahmins. In response, they too learnt English and entered the new educational institutions. In time, they started to compete with the Brahmins for jobs in the British administration.

At the same time, British ideas of what was modern were also becoming fashionable. One of the key ideas of modernity is that of equality between social groups, all though this was, of course, never true in colonial Britain itself. The non brahmins were able to use these ideas of equality to criticize the brahmins.

The medium they used for their criticism was a new one, the printed book and pamphlets. When the British introduced printing presses they were initially controlled by the Brahmins. In the 1850s there is a story of how one of these Brahmin printing houses printed the Ramayana for the first time and specially employed only Brahmin boys to do the job because it was considered a sacred text. In time, however, as non brahmins grew in power, they re-wrote the Ramayana to protest brahmin dominance, north Indian dominance, and in time, the outrageous treatment of women in the earlier brahmanic tellings. These new versions were printed for widespread distribution among all classes and castes. For the first time they were acted out as plays on urban stages, and used in political protest rallies. At one of them in Madras in 1956, a picture of Rama was burnt (in contrast to the burning of Ravana in north India). The political leader who came up with the idea was arrested.

## How Did British Colonialism (a) Change Relationships Between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, (b) Transform Ideas of What it Was to be Modern, and (c) Introduce New Forms and Technologies of Communication, like Printing Presses? How Did These Effect the Ramayana?

### Worksheet 3a

In the first half of this century many protest *Ramayanas* were written in southern India. One of these was by a man named Gudipati Venkata Chalam. Taking the broad outlines of his play, put up a small skit for your class mates.

The play begins with the battle of Lanka won and Sita inviting Rama to embrace her. To her amazement she discovers that he has his doubts about her love for him. She has lived in the enemy's house for too long. Sita is outraged. "Is it my fault?" she asks that Ravana took her away. She realizes that Rama sees her only as an object to be possessed when it gives him pride and thrown out when polluted. She argues back that Ravana loved her despite the fact that she did not return his love. That he loved her despite knowing she was polluted by Rama's touch. The play ends with Sita declaring "some day intelligent people will know who was the nobler lover".

### Worksheet 3b

In the first half of this century many protest *Ramayanas* were written in southern India. One of these was by a man named Venkateshwar Rao. Taking the broad outlines of his play, put up a small skit for your class mates.

The play focuses on the part in the story when Rama is defending the brahmin sages in the forest by killing off the non-brahmin demons. The demons are the early residents of the forest; they use it carefully for gathering food, fruit, firewood, medicines and fibre. The sages are no longer wandering gatherers of food. They lead settled lives and so have to grow crops to eat. For their expanding population, they need more and more food. They are asking Rama, the warrior, for help to drive the original inhabitants of the forest, the demons, away and clear the forest for cultivation. They do this by singing his praises. Sita sees through their story. She tells Rama that the demons are innocent. She suggests that the sages are greedy for more and more land and they are using Rama to expand their control to the south. Sita reminds Rama that he had promised his mother he would live like a sage in the forest. This means he should not bear arms or do violence. Rama refuses to listen. He insists he has taken a vow to protect the brahmins and must do so. The play ends with Sita prophesying "one day you will leave me alone to please the brahmins".

## UNIT 25, LESSON 1

### Focus Question: What Role Does Caste Play in the Ramayana and Indians' Interpretations of it?

### Major Ideas

- The Ramayana talks mostly about varna, not caste.
- Caste in India is very varied.
- The standard explanations of caste are not accepted by all.

### Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- know the difference between varna and caste.
- recognize caste variation.
- understand some ways in which caste is contested.

### Teacher background

*Caste is probably the most difficult issue to understand regarding India, and it is often misrepresented. In Vedic India, four large social groupings, called varna, were recognized: the Brahmin (priest), Kshatriya (warrior/king), Vaishya (traders) and Shudra (workers/laborers) as well as untouchables, who were outside of this system. But varna exists today only as an ideal to which various castes, called jati (meaning species, as in different kinds of human beings), are associated. Each caste is then thought to belong to one of the varna, or to the untouchable group, although it is not uncommon to find people who do not know what varna their caste is thought to belong to. The on-the-ground social groupings through which social life is enacted are castes, and there are thousands of caste groups in India, with each village having a different selection of castes than every other village. Castes are usually designated by an occupational name: Goldsmith, Leather worker, Carpenter, Vegetable Grower, Washerman, Herder, Sweeper, etc. These names do not include modern occupations and anyone can be a doctor, a factory worker, a computer engineer. And in fact, anyone with land can be a farmer.*

*In each small community, the various castes located there are ranked, primarily on an economic basis, but with some recognition of ritual purity. So a village with very poor Brahmins would not rank the Brahmins at the bottom of their social hierarchy, but might rank them below landowning Shepherds. For the purposes of village interactions, all members of any given caste group have the same ranking, so that if they are low and other castes do not take food from them, other castes do not take food from even a very rich member of that caste group. However, a caste group can change its ranking in its local community by gaining in wealth and, in essence, forcing the other caste groups to recognize their wealth by eating their food.*

*One of the primary forms of demonstrating caste hierarchies is through food and touching. High castes do not take food from low castes. They may not take water from low castes. They may not touch members of the low castes (hence the term untouchable). When Rama takes Shabari's fruits, which she has already taken a bite of, he is breaking all rules, for she has contaminated the fruits with her saliva.*

*In modern India, the government has lists that give some low castes special privileges, an Indian version of Affirmative Action programs. And caste groups now act as voting blocks in Indian politics, and caste is a major issue in any political arena in India.*

*The Ramayana talks only about varna, so Rama is continually identified as a Kshatriya, a warrior/king while he has Brahmin guides. Most other social groups are not mentioned at all. But one famous scene, in lesson one below, is based on Rama's interaction with an untouchable woman. So even in the Ramayana, caste was a contentious issue.*

*Some use the Ramayana as a way of explaining alternative explanations of caste, instead of the classic explanation that is found in the Purusa hymn where the four varnas are defined. Lesson two presents this explanation from a man of a middle ranked caste.*

### Springboard

▸ Put the term CASTE on the board and brainstorm about the term. (The idea of status by birthright is crucial here.)

- What does it mean?
- Does the U.S. have comparable groupings?
- Do we challenge those groupings?

### Procedure

This lesson is best used in conjunction with the lessons on caste in *A South Asia Curriculum: Teaching About India* (The American Forum for Global Education, NY, NY 1994) or after an initial discussion of caste, through readings in your textbook.

▸ Divide students into groups of three or four. Pass out **Worksheet 1**. Ask students to read it and as a group answer the questions.

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## What Role Does Caste Play in the Ramayana and Indians' Interpretations of it?

### Worksheet 1

*(The Story of Shabari, adapted from the Ramayana)*

After Sita was kidnaped by the demon Ravana, Rama and Lakshmana were left in the forest searching for her. In their wanderings, they came to the forest dwelling of Shabari, an old woman. She was a hermit who had lived in the forest for many years worshiping the gods and praying. She was also of very low caste.

Shabari was very pleased to see Rama and Lakshmana and wished to offer them hospitality. But she had little to eat in her house, so she collected some small fruits from the forest to present to the two warriors. Wanting to be sure that the fruits were sweet, she took a bite of each of them before offering them Rama and Lakshmana. Lakshmana was horrified: how could he, a warrior, eat fruits contaminated by the mouth of the low caste woman? But Rama quietly ate the fruits, realizing that Shabari had offered them to him with love and that he would offend her if he didn't eat them. Offending her was a greater crime than polluting himself by eating the fruits.

### Questions

- Rama and Lakshmana disagreed. Why? Which do you feel was more correct?
- When are you polite and do something you feel is wrong, because not doing it might offend someone?
- Why might this story be important to people in India who are considered untouchables?

*(The Story of the Origins of the Low Castes as told by Raghunath, a Farmer from the village Karimpur in northern India.)*

The Kshatriyas are of the lineage of the sun. This is the lineage of Lord Rama. I am born to the lineage of Lav, the son of Rama. Those other vegetable growers are born of the lineage of Kush, Rama's other son. Now both Kush and Lav are the sons of Rama. So I too am of the lineage of Rama, because I was born to the family of Lav. Now Lav had four sons. These four sons were not all alike. Their father thought, "Now what should I do: there are four boys, they receive some training."

So they began their training. One became an Accountant. Another learned how to parch grain and became a Grain Parcher. That one lived in dirty conditions and parched grain. Then there was the one who became a Farmer. He worked hard in the fields and learned how to farm. The last one, he learned how to carry water and help cook. He became a Watercarrier. This is how these four castes came into being. But they are all descended from Rama. We are of the lineage of Rama.

## Questions

- Why do you think it was so important for Raghunath to believe that his caste was descended from Rama?
- Do you have ancestors that you are proud of? Why do we consider our ancestors important?
- If you were a low caste person in India, would this story make your situation easier?

(*The Story of The Shudra and the Vedas, a folk story about Rama and his rule after returning to Ayodhya*.)

In Rama's kingdom, life was so good that Brahmin youth never died. No Brahmin boy ever died, because no one was committing a sin. This was the rule of Rama, *rama rajya*. But one day a Brahmin boy died. The populace was distraught. The Brahman came to Rama and said, "You have sinned. That is why my son died." Rama was very upset and consulted the Brahmin who was his advisor. The Brahmin said that some untouchable was trying to do rituals. So Rama sent his servants out to discover who had committed a sin. They discovered that an untouchable, Shambuka, had been learning the sacred texts, the Vedas, texts that only Brahmins had the right to learn.

Enraged, Rama went to where the untouchable lived and cut off his arms and his head. The untouchable fell to the earth. Order was restored in Rama's kingdom and the Brahmin son came back to life.

## Questions

- Was Rama right to cut of the untouchable's head? Is it right to deny certain people an education?
- Do you think that untouchable sons were dying while Brahmin sons were living? Can you think of any similar situations in our country?

## UNIT 25, LESSON 2

### Teacher Background

*This lesson looks at one way in which caste and the ideology of caste are protested in India today. It is important that students in the US realize that caste is not accepted by all Indians, although that is the popular perception. In this protest song, sung by a group of untouchables in northern India, the Ramayana is the vehicle for protest. It refers to Hindu-Muslim conflicts over the past decade, conflicts which are thought by government and untouchable alike to be started by agitators who seek to destabilize the government. (See also lesson x, this volume.) Those most hurt by these conflicts are the poor who depend on daily wages to survive. If their town has a week-long curfew, they have no income for a week. The rich can survive these closings, but the poor cannot.*

*The song also refers to a popular belief that the Ramayana describes the conflict between India's native peoples and the Aryans. Hence Ravana becomes the hero, the monkeys are the aborigines (who become low castes and untouchables) and Rama is guilty of warring on the weak.*

### Procedure

▸ Distribute **Worksheet 2**. Read and discuss this song in class. Students should be asked to think about comparable traditions in our country (rap, rock and country music all conveying political, anti-elite traditions). They should also discuss any similarities with our history.

If you live near an area with Indian stores, you might seek out a store with tape cassettes and ask if they have any cassettes of Indian rap. One particularly popular singer is Apache Indian, a singer born of Indian descent in Birmingham, England, who uses a modified rap style to sing social protest songs about life in India and England. His songs deal with topics like arranged marriages and caste. They would be effective vehicles for reaching your students.

### Summary

✎ For homework, ask each student to write a song or story about caste in India. They could write a story of Shabara's lineage. Or they could compose a song (in any style) about the evils of caste.

## What Role Does Caste Play in the Ramayana and Indians' Interpretations of it?

### Worksheet 2

*Read this song sung by an untouchable in north India.*

The rulers who control all knowledge,
Claim the Ramayana to be India's history
And called us many names - demons, low castes, untouchables.
But we were the aborigines of this land.
Listen to our story.

Today we are called the *dalits* - the oppressed.
Once the Aryans on their horses invaded this land.
Then we who are the natives became the displaced.
Oh Rama, Oh Rama, You became the God and we the demons.
You portrayed our Hanuman as a monkey,
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

You enslaved us to form a monkey army,
Those you could not subjugate
You called a *rakshasa* - a demon.
But we are the forest *rakshak* - the protectors.
You invented the hierarchy of caste
Through your laws of Manu, the first man.
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

And you trampled on the rights of women.
You made your wife Sita undergo the ordeal of fire
To prove her chastity.
Such were your male laws, Oh Rama.
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

When Shambuka, the Untouchable
Tried to gain knowledge,
You beheaded him, oh Rama.
Thus did you crush those who tried to rise above their caste.
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

Days passed, years and centuries,
But our lives remained the same.
We skinned your cattle,
So that you can wear shoes.
We clean your gutters,
So that you can stay clean.

Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

Did you ever even ask, Oh Rama,
What our caste is?
Did you ever even ask
What our religion is?
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

Independence dawned.
It began with the rule of the consitution.
The author of the constitution Dr. Ambedkar
Framed the constitution around secular ideals.
The castle of caste privileges began to crumble.
No longer could the elite skim
The milk of religious exploitation.
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

But poverty grew and to divert the poor
From their real need, a new enemy was found.
Muslims were targeted and "taught a lesson".
To destroy Lanka, Oh Rama, you
Formed us into a monkey army.
And today you want us,
The working majority,
To form a new monkey army
And attack Muslims.
Oh Rama, you representative of the Aryans.

Be warned, you purveyors of a self-serving religion.
We will be monkeys no more.
We will sing songs of humanity
And we will make you human as well.

# Appendix

## Spotlight on Ramayana Video

**The accompanying video is an additional resource to be used with the lessons in this guide. Here is a listing of contents and suggestions for their use in specific lessons.**

### ❶ The Story of the Ramayana

This 15 minute segment tells the story of the Ramayana using illustrations from a variety of suources, including god posters, puppets of major characters, illustrated books, and minature paintings. It can be used alone to teach the outlines of the story, as a resource for students' reading the story in our condensation (see *The Ramayana: A "Telling" of the Ancient Indian Epic*) or it can be used with any lesson. It is particularly relevant to the lessons of Chapter I, which focus on the story itself.

### ❷ Many Tellings: The Ramayana In Performance

a) Village Ram Lila - 3 minutes
b) School Pagent - 3 minutes
c) Kathakali performance from Kerala, South India - 4 minutes
d) the Ram Lila at Banaras, the most spectacular performance in India, (told with illustrations)

These multiple performance versions indicate the variety of ways in which the Ramayana continues to be told and enacted in India today. The first three present live performances, representing different regions and different degrees of professionalism while the fourth piece is based on slides of the Banaras Ram Lila.

a) The village Ram Lila (literally "the play of Ram") is put on by the men of a village in northern India and is an amateur performance. The group owns the backdrop and costumes and preserves them from year-to-year. Only a singer was paid. These performances take place at night, usually during October when the festival called Dassehra is held throughout India. This festival celebrates the defeat of the demon Ravana and Rama's return to his kingdom. The whole of the Ramayana is told over a ten or thirty day period (depending upon the complexity of the performance and the financial resources of its patrons).

Throughout northern India, villages and local communities in urban areas organize their own Ram Lilas. The most magnificient of these Ram Lilas is that of the Maharaja of Banaras (see **d** below), which is a thirty day performance held in the holy city of Banaras. Depending upon the community, there may be restrictions on the caste of the performers. This performance has only Brahman performers, and Rama, Lakshmana and Sita are all played by unmarried boys who have not yet had their voices change.

b) The School Pagent was produced for Republic Day, celebrating Indiais Independence. Note that only males are allowed to perform, although this middle school is co-educational. You might consider too the fact of a very Hindu play being put on in a school with both Hindu and Muslim students, especially in these contentious times of religious conflict India.

c) Rathakali is a dance-drama form found in Kerala, on the southwestern coast of India. These men are professionals who train rigorously in this style. It takes hours each day to put on their makeup and costumes. The performances are held at night at any time of the year. Usually a village will sponsor a professional troupe, perhaps for a festival at their temple or some auspicious event in a rich household.

d) In this section, we see illustrations of the Ram Lila of the Raja of Banaras, perhaps the most elaborate and famous of the Ram Lilas in India today. The performers train for months, and the performance itself takes place daily over a 30 day period. Further, the performance moves around geographically, with performers, audience and props moving into the countryside for Rama's exile in the forest and into a local palace for the scene's in Dasaratha household. The Raja himself appears nightly. Rama, Lakshman and Sita are all played by Brahman youths, who may graduate to other parts as they mature. The script used is said to be a century old and the clirectors participate for years before achieving the right to be in charge.

### ❸ Men and Women's Song Performances (total 4 minutes)

The Ramayana is a tradition that moves into a variety of settings. It is not only performed as a narrative, but may be part of other events, may be the basis for a song or a Joke or a proverb. In Chapter I, Unit 4 of the curriculum, the lesson deals with the ways in which men and women include episodes and ideas from the Ramayana in their song traditions. This short piece illustrates the events in which these songs are sung.

The men's event takes place on a verandah, in this case partially enclosed by a cloth 'wall' to keep out the cold of a north Indian December night. The men begin to gather after their evening meal. These men are all Brahmans, performing on the verandah of a Brahman house. Various instruments are played: a drum, a clay pot, a harmonium, a "bottle" (a whiskey bottle beat with two sticks), large steel tongs and some cymbals. The players are experts on these instruments and will probably not let others take their places, even if the gathering lasts for hours. The singers rotate, but the men known for having good voices dominate. In a gathering like this, you must earn the right to sing. Often these men will compete against troupes from other villages, seeking the audience's appreciation for one or the other group. Displaying honor is critical here, as is gaining it through a strong performance.

Note that the songs are linear, not repetitive and that there is a solo singer, not a group production.

The women's event takes place during the afternoon inside the family's courtyard. This event also takes place in a Brahmin household to celebrate the return of a visiting daughter. Earlier in the day, the family had called a Watercarrier woman who is their servant and had hex take a message to all the other Brahmin houses of the village that a bulaua, literally a 'calling', would take place that afternoon. Then the women cleaned their courtyard, smeared it with a fresh layer of cowdung paste to purify it, and donned their best clothes. They also sent one of the men of the family to the market for several pounds of puffed sugar candies. As

2 pm neared, they spread a mat on the courtyard floor and waited for the women of other houses to arrive. Each Brahmin house in the village sends it's senior most woman and all its girl children, plus an odd younger male child.

For the women, this is a time to gather and gossip, f or they are in purdah and seldom have a chance to visit with one another. Note the seating arrangements and compare them to the men's. Only one instrument, a drum, is played and the drum is passed from woman to woman (or girl to girl) throughout the afternoon as they take turns leading the songs, which are group productions and highly repetitive. Consider the implications of this structure versus that of the men described above.

### ❹ The Monkey God Hanuman (2 minutes).

This is a brief introduction to the image of the god Hanuman and is ideally suited for Chapter III, Unit 9, which is concerned with this deity. But it can also be used as an enrichment for any of the units in Chapters I, II, or III or with some other unit on Hindu deities.

### ❺ Life Cycle Rites

a) A Naming Ceremony (2 mintues)
b) A Girl's puberty ceremony and a boy's sacred thread ceremony (2 minutes)
c) Weddings (8 minutes)
d) Death and the City of Banaras (4 minutes)

These four segments are to be used with the lessons in Chapter IV. They present very brief illustrations of Hindu samskaras, or rituals of transition. These are the major life cycle rituals for Hindus - birth, puberty, marriage and death.

a) Naming Ceremony (to go with Chapter IV, Unit 14) The naming ceremony is from a village in north India. Here a child is given a ritual name on the tenth day after its birth. The mother is also ritually purified, after the pollution of childbirth. Prior to the ceremony, she has bathed several times and donned new clothes. Since lineage is critically important, the grandfather is the first to participate in the ritual. In some respects, the new baby belongs to him as much as to the mother and father. Then the mother and father, the mother with her face covered due to purdah restrictions enter the ritual space and after they are ritually purified, make offerings to the sacred fire with the help of their Brahmin priest. The priest then whispers the baby's name in its ear and writers it for the father to keep in a safe place. Afterwards, the priest is fed and the family may have a special meal.

b) Puberty Rituals (to go with Chapter IV, Unit 17.) Much of the explanation needed to understand this ritual is given in the teacher's background in the lesson itself. The girl's puberty ritual took place in a Hindu household in Sri Lanka while the boy's sacred thread ceremony took place in a village in north India.

c) Weddings (to go with Chapter IV, Unit 16.) Weddings In South Asia are events that unite two families, not join two individuals. They are lavish events, often costing a family's yearly income. Even amongst the 70 percent of India's population that lives in rural villages, weddings are costly in regards to their income, and relatively lavish.

The first section given here is of a village wedding in a Brahman house in Karimpuṛ in northern India. We see the events at the girl's house: her ritual bath with tumeric, donning the green bangles signifying marriage, the groom's arrival and greeting, the girl and her parents in the first minutes of the actual marriage ceremony, and the bride and groom, culminating in their circling of the sacred fire.

The other two episodes are from Hindu Weddings taking place in the U.S.

d) Funerals (to go with Chapter IV, Unit 18.) Banaras, also known as Varanasi, is the most sacred Hindu city: it is believed that if you die in Banares, your accumulated sins are removed. Banaras is also the city of Shiva, the destroyer and creator, worshiped by Rama before he begins his war against Ravana.

These clips show the burning ghats of Banaras, the most auspicious place to cremate the dead, as well as the temples of Banaras.

### ❻ Rama's Journey and the Geography of India (6 mintues)

This segment should be used with Chapter V, Unit 23.) Here we briefly explore the geography of India while journeying with Rama from Ayodhya to Sri Lanka in search of Sita. This lesson could be used in conjunction with any geography exexercise as well.

### ❼ Rituals of India (4 mintues)

Here we briefly illustrate some of the rituals discussed in Chapter V, Unit 20. These pieces could also be shown with Chapter IV, Unit 13 on Puja. The rituals are thoroughly discussed in the lessons.

## Teacher Resources

### Book List

*Twenty Stories* by Satyajit Ray.
Mysteries and Ghost Stories set in Calcutta mainly. Short and easy to read.

*Grin and Bear It, Abhy* by Srigun Srivastav.
Contemporary story about teenagers in India.

*The Warning* by Srigun Srivastav.
"Spine-chilling adventure". Contemporary Indian teenagers solve a mystery.

*The Case of the Shady Sikh and Other Stories* by Jacqueline Singh.
Mysteries, children triumphant over evil.

*Folk Tales from India* by A.K. Ramanujan.
Short folk tales from all over India. Grouped by themes: women-centered, male-centered, families, Gods, demons and such, etc.

*Beastly Tales form Here and There* by Vikram Seth.
Poetry, funny, from India, China, Greece and the Ukraine.

*A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth.
Very long novel, funny, follows 5 families over generations. Could use one or two chapters.

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie.
Delightful tale about a story teller who has been banned from telling stories. An allegory of Rushdie's own plight and of the state of Kashmir-long fought over by India and Pakistan.

*Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie.
Again,can use excerpts tells the tale of India at Independence. Of the style of Garcia Marquez.

*The Slate of Life* edited by Kali for Women.

*In Other Worlds* edited by Urvashi Butalia an Ritu Menon.

*Of Women Outcastes, Peasants, and Rebels* edited by Kalapana Bardhan.
The above three anthologies are by well reputed current writers. Many focus on women's lives.

*A River Called Titash* edited by Kalpana Bardhan.
Biography of a fisherman in a small Bengali village.

*Indian Stories* by Rumer Godden.
Collection of stories from a British view point.

# South Asia Outreach Centers

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY<br>Southern Asian Institute<br>420 West 118th Street<br>New York NY 10027<br>Email: jsh3@columbia edu | John S. Hawley<br>212-854-4662 | Barbara Gombach<br>212-854-4565 | Ivan Santiago<br>212-854-3809 |
| CORNELL UNIVERSITY<br>South Asia Program<br>170 Uris Hall<br>Ithaca NY 14850-7601 | Shelley Feldman<br>607-255-8493/8909 | Susan Campbell<br>607-255-8493 | Louise Place<br>607-255-5822 |
| SYRACUSE UNVERSITY<br>South Asia Center<br>321E Sims Hall<br>Syracuse NY 13244-1230 | Susan Wadley<br>315-443-4198 | Michael Bowler<br>315-443-2533 | Susan Wadley<br>315-443-4198 |
| UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY<br>Center for South Asia Studies<br>201 Moses Hall<br>Berkeley CA 94720-2310<br>Email: spoulos@uclink.berkeley.edu | Robert Goldman<br>510-642-3608 | Jennifer Cool<br>510-642-3608 | Michelle Bullock<br>510-643-7477 |
| UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO<br>South Asia National Resource Center<br>Greenhall 416 • 5848 South University Avenue<br>Chicago IL 60637 | Susanne Hoeber Rudolph<br>312-702-8055 | Kate Schechter<br>312-702-8635 | Pamela Blunt<br>312-702-7818/0871 |
| UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA<br>South Asia Regional Studies<br>820 Williams Hall<br>Philadelphia PA 19104-6305<br>Email: dludden@sas.upenn.edu | David Ludden<br>215-898-7475 | Robert Young<br>215-898-7475 | Richard Cohen<br>215-898-7475 |
| UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS<br>Center for Asian Studies<br>Mail Code 59300<br>Austin TX 78712-1194 | Patrick Olivelle<br>512-471-5811 | Sandra Paschall<br>512-471-5811 | Karla Renaud<br>512-471-5811 |
| UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA UC<br>Center for South Asian Studies<br>Hotel D, East Range<br>Charlottesville VA 22903 | Karen Lang<br>804-924-8815 | Cynthia Benton-Groner<br>804-924-8815 | Cynthia Benton-Groner<br>804-924-8815 |
| UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON<br>South Asia Center<br>Thomson Hall<br>Seattle WA 98195 | Frank Conlon<br>206-543-4800 | Maureen Haley Terada<br>206-543-4800 | Nola Blanes<br>206-543-7152 |
| UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN<br>Center for South Asia<br>1258 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive<br>Madison WI 53706<br>Email: SASIANCTR@macc.wisc.edu | Joseph Elder<br>608-262-3012 | Sharon Dickson<br>608-262-3209 | Joan Krikelas<br>608-262-9632 |

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## Recipe File: Festivals of India

### Ram Navami: South India

**Panakam** (This is a cooling, lightly spiced sweet drink)
1 cup brown sugar
2 cups water
1 pinch dry ginger powder
1/8 tsp. cardamom powder

*Dissolve the brown sugar in water. Stir well. Strain through fine muslin cloth. Add ginger and cardamom. Stir. Chill before serving.*

**Meva** (Fruit Mix)
2 cups melon (1"pieces)
1 cup thinly sliced bananas
1 cup sliced jackfruit
1 cup sliced mango fruit
1/2 cup sugar (or 1/2 cup sugar syrup)

*Mix the above ingredients together. Chill. [Note: Meva is offered during the mango season to the deity, Balaji, at the hill temple in Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh. Canned jackfruit and mango fruit are available in some supermarkets.]*

**Kosumbri**
1/2 cup moong dhal or chick peas
1 cup fresh grated coconut
1 cup finely sliced cucumber
2 T finely sliced green chilies
1 tsp salt
2 T lime juice or 4 T minced green mango
1 T oil or ghee
1 tsp mustard seed

*Carefully remove stones from the dhal. Wash. Soak the dhal in water for two hours. Drain. Omitting the oil and mustard seed, add remaining ingredients to the dhal. Fry the mustard seed in oil until it crackles. Pour over the vegetables. Mix Well. ([Note: This is one of the Lord Rama's favorite foods, mentioned in the Ramayana.]*

**Kosumbri** (Modern Version)
1/2 cup grated carrots
1/2 cup grated coconut
1/2 cup grated green mango or 2 T fresh lemon juice
4 T sliced green chilies
1 tsp salt
2 tsp oil
1 tsp mustard seed

*Mix the carrots, coconut, lemon juice, chilies and salt. Fry the mustard seed in oil until it crackles. Add to the carrot mixture. Variations - Add 1/2 cup of finely sliced cabbage and 4 T of shelled green peas. Add 1/2 c of finely sliced green pepper to the carrots and coconut.*

### Pulihor

1/2 pav rice - cooked and ready;
1 big marble-sized lump tamarind - soaked in 1/2 cup water and extract juice
1 dessert spoon ghee (clarified butter)
1 big pinch turmeric powder
Salt to taste;
2 T grated coconut
1/2 tsp husked Bengal-gram lentils
2 red chilies
1/2 tsp husked black-gram lentils
1 rounded dessertspoon sesame seeds
*Roast separate until light brown and powder together*;*
2 dessertspoons ghee
1 pinch mustard
1 pinch cumin
1/4 tsp husked black-gram lentils
6 seeds fenegreek seeds
4 cashew-nuts chopped
1 red chilli broken into bits
1 big pinch asafoetida powder
1 sprig curry leaves
Seasonings;

*Mix ghee with tamarind juice and boil over a low flame, stirring often until the juice thickens to the consistency of jam. Add tumeric powder, salt and the powdered ingredients.* Blend well and mix with rice. Season and stir constantly over low flame for 10 minutes.*

### Phova Kheer

1 T thin beaten rice
1 tsp ghee
8 pod cardamom - skin and powder
1/4 cup sugar
*Mix;*
1 level dessertspoon rice - wash, and grind to paste with a little water;
1 coconut - grate.

*Grind with 1/3 cup of water and extract juice (thick juice). Grind the residue with 2/3 cup of water and extract juice (thin juice). Mix rice paste with the "thin juice" evenly, without lumps and stir continuously over a low flame for 8 minutes. Add beaten rice mixture and bring to boil. Remove from flame, stir in the "thick juice" and serve.*

## Divali: South India

### Panchakajjai - 4 servings

3 T whole Bengal gram - roast over a low flame until brown. Grind into halves in a chakki. Winnow, and grind again to the consistency of sand.
1/2 a big coconut - grated finely
3 heaped T with sugar

9 pods cardamom - skin and powder
*Crush together.**
1 dessert spoon sesame seed - roasted over a low flame until light brown.

*Add coconut mixture* and thil to the Bengal-gram soji. Mix well and serve with ghee. A similar preparation can be made with any of the following:*

1. *Green-gram - as with Bengal-gram;*
2. *"Layi" - without prior roasting;*
3. *Beaten rice - without prior roasting.*

*Note: Roasting of the Bengal-gram is done to facilitate the separation of the husk after grinding. It is also done to remove the raw smell of the gram.*

### Anaras

1 cup rice - wash and soak for 3 days, changing water daily
3/4 cup sugar - powder
4 T liquid ghee (clarified butter)
1/2 tsp pepper powder
1/2 tsp cardamom powder
1 pinch salt;
1 T khus khus;
Ghee for deep frying

*On the 4th day drain off and discard water from rice and air it on a piece of cloth for an hour. Pound well and pass through a fine sieve. Add sugar and ghee to this rice flour mix well and store in covered jar for 3 days. Pound this mixture, add pepper powder, cardamom powder and salt. Knead well. If the dough can be formed into firm rounds without cracking, divide it into 60 equal portions and flatten on the palm into 1/4 inch thick rounds. Sprinkle khus khus thinly over each and press down slightly to adhere. Prepare 3 to 4 at a time thus and fry over a low flame until light brown, turning over twice or thrice. Anaras becomes hard if oven fried. If on the other hand the mixture cracks on forming into rounds, add to it half a ripe banana and pound well. Knead and proceed as before. Serve half an hour after frying. Remains crisp for a week.*

### Chudva

1/2 pav thick beaten rice - deep fry, little at a time, in oil kept at smoking point
1/4 pav chopped cashew-nuts - fry in a little oil to a light brown
1 big pinch turmeric powder
Table salt to taste - *Mix 4 ingredients together well**.
1/4 coconut - cut into fine slices or grated finely. Dry in strong sun for 2 or 3 hours.
1/2 tsp oil
1 pinch mustard
2 sprigs curry leaves - chop
1/2 tsp chilli powder
Seasoning.

*Season coconut or copra and stir continuously over a low flame until light brown. Add beaten rich mixture* and stir as before for 10 more minutes. When quite cool, store in an air-tight tin.*

### Phenori

1 pav white flour
1 pinch salt - *mix and prepare a soft dough with a sufficient quantity of water.*

1 lime-sized lump butter - melt slightly
1 dessertspoon Bombay rava or coarse rice flour;
1/2 pav sugar
3/4 cup water -prepare a syrup which can be drawn into long strings.
Ghee for deep frying.

*Roll the dough into 12 paper-thin puris of equal size. Apply a little butter on one side of each. Place a puri on a board, buttered side up. Sprinkle a little of the rava or rice flour evenly over the exposed surface. Place another puri over this and deal similarly . Repeat the process until all are piled one over the other thus. Roll the pile round a thin stick or pencil. Slip the stick or pencil out and cut the roll into slices about 1/6 inch thick. Place each slice on its cut surface and roll lightly without dusting further with flour.Drop 6 to 8 phenoris in ghee kept at smoking point. Reduce the heat immediately and fry over a low flame until crisp, turning over constantly. Dip the fried ones in syrup and arrange on a greased plate in a single layer. When the syrup sets, remove and store in an air-tight container. To make the phenoris less sweet, omit dipping in syrup and sprinkle powdered sugar over them soon after frying.*

**Pappadam** - makes 25
2 cups urad dhal
1 tsp cumin seed
1/2 - 3/4 cup water
1/2 tsp asafetida powder
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking soda
1/4 cup vegetable oil

*Grind the urad dhal into a fine flour. Add cumin seed. Mix the water, asafetida, salt and baking soda. Stir to dissolve the asafoetida. Slowly add the mixture to the flour and cumin seed. Mix well and make into a hard, smooth dough. Cover with a damp cloth and allow to set for one hour. Place the dough on a pastry board and beat with a rolling pin or hammer. While pounding, turn the dough again and again until it becomes very soft. Gradually work all of the oil into the dough. Shape the dough into a round cylinder and cut into approximately 25 pieces. Shape each into small balls, dip in rice flour and roll into very thin 6" circles on a floured board. Place the rolled-out pappadams on a cookie sheet and dry in a warming oven for several hours or until all moisture has evaporated. Traditionally, pappadams are sun-dried. Stored in an air-tight container they will keep for months. When ready to serve, deep fry a few seconds on both sides in very hot oil. Serve hot.* **Note**: You can buy pappadams ready to fry in most oriental food stores.

## Caribbean

### Parsad (Prasad/Mohan Bhog) - makes 40-50 servings

2 1/2 lbs/1125 grms sifted white flour
2 1/2 lbs/1125 grams ghee
1/4 lb/100 grms munaka (raisins or currants)
1 pk (14 ozs/350 grms) cream of wheat
2 tsp/2 X 5 ml spoon cardamon
2 lbs/900 grms granulated sugar
2 large tins (800 mls) evaporated milk
2 ozs/15 grms grated ginger (optional)

2 large pieces cinnamon sticks
4 liters water.

*Boil sugar and water with cinnamon sticks. Heat ghee on a slow fire and add flour. Keep stirring flour until parched(or until the flour is loose). Add cream of wheat, raisins, cardomon and grated ginger. Add sugar mixture and milk. Turn briskly with a wooden spoon until light and fluffy. Allow to cool before serving.*

## Pongal: South India

### Pongal - makes 6 servings

1/2 cup green split peas
1/2 cup butter or margarine
water
3/4 cup uncooked basmati rice
2/3 cup sugar
1/2 cup cashew nuts
1/4 cup raisins

*Pinch each of ground cloves and cardamom. Fry beans in 1 T of the butter until lightly browned. Bring to boil 3 1/2 cups water, add beans and rice, and cook until very soft.*
*Add 2 T water to sugar and boil to a syrup, about 10 minutes. Add cooked rice and beans to syrup and stir, adding remaining butter, nuts and raisins. Serve hot, sprinkled with cloves and cardamom.*

### **Pongali** (Kichree)

1/2 cup green split peas
1 1/2 cups rice
3/4 cup ghee
1/4 halved cashews
2 tsp cumin seed
1 1/2 tsp whole pepper
1/4 tsp asafoetida
1 1/2 tsp chopped green ginger
1 3/4 tsp salt

*Remove stones from lentils. Wash and drain. Bring 6 cups of water to a boil in a 3 quart saucepan. Add dhal and rice. Cover. Simmer for approximately 20 minutes or until the rice and dhal are tender. Stir occasionally. Heat one-quarter cup of ghee and fry the cashews until golden brown. Remove the cashews from the ghee and add to the rice. Add cumin, pepper, asafoetida and ginger to the hot ghee. Fry until the whole peppers burst. Pour this mixture into the rice. Add salt and mix thoroughly. Cover. Cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Heat the balance of the ghee(1/2 cup). Pour into the rice. Stir thoroughly. Remove from heat.*

### Payasam

1/2 cup rice
5 cups milk
2 1/2 cups sugar
3 T ghee
1/4 cup sliced cashew nuts

2 T golden raisins
1 1/2 tsps cardamom powder
1 pinch saffron, soaked in 1 T of milk or water

*Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a 2 quart saucepan. Add rice. Stir, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until the rice is very soft. Add milk, boil for 10 minutes. Add sugar. Stir. Boil 5 minutes. Heat the ghee in a skillet. Fry the cashews until golden brown. Remove from the ghee. Drain. Add to the boiling milk and rice. Fry the raisins in the hot ghee until they puff up. Remove, drain and add to the boiling milk. Boil 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add cardamom and saffron. Stir. Cool.*

### Teej: Caribbean

**Sawine - makes 8 servings**
1 pack/212 grms vermicelli (fine noodles)
1 tsp/1 X 5 ml spoon butter
1 tsp/1 X 5 ml spoon elychee (cardamom)
1 1/2 tins/596 grms condensed milk
2 ozs/50 grms raisins or currants (optional)
6 grains clove
2 medium size sticks cinnamon
1 tin/250 mls evaporated milk
2 pts/1200 mls hot water
Cherries, almond nuts, prunes (optional)

*Put water to boil, Break up vermicelli into small pieces about 1" long. Melt butter in a fairly large iron pot, add vermicelli to butter and let parch until it turns to a golden brown color. Keep turning vermicelli. Pour all the boiling water into pot with the vermicelli. Add raisins, clove, cinnamon, evaporated milk,condensed milk and elychee. Allow to boil for a few minutes until tender. Serve with chopped nuts, cherries and prunes.*

### North India

**Puri - makes 25**
2 cups chapati flour or
1 cup sifted whole-wheat flour plus 1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
about 1 cup water
Sifted whole-wheat flour for dusting
2 cups vegetable oil.

*In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Slowly stir in just enough water to make a soft dough; turn the dough onto a floured surface and knead 8-10 minutes, adding more flour as needed, until the dough is smooth and elastic. (This dough will remain soft and slightly sticky.) Shape the dough into a ball and place in the bowl. Cover with a clean damp cloth or plastic wrap and set in a warm place for at least 30 minutes, or up to 3 hours. Dampen your hands and knead the dough briefly. Divide the dough into 25 portions and shape each portion into a ball. On a lightly floured board surface, roll out each ball of dough to a 4" round. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat to 365 degrees F. Using a slotted spoon, place the puris, four at a time, in the oil. With the spoon hold the puris under the oil or gently swish oil over the surface of the breads with the spoon until the puris balloon up and turn light brown,* *15-20 seconds. Turn the puris over and cook 10-15 seconds. Drain on paper towels and keep warm in 275 degree F oven while you fry the remaining puris. Stack slightly overlapping on paper towels, the breads will remain puffy about 30 minutes in the oven.*

**Gajar Halwa** - makes 6 servings
Water
1 can (14 ozs) sweetened condensed milk
2 cups grated carrots
1 cup cooking oil, butter, or margarine
2 T each of chopped blanched almonds and raisins
1/4 tsp ground saffron
1 T fresh lime juice, heated.

*Add one can of water to condensed milk and bring to a boil. Add carrot and cook over low heat for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add oil gradually. Cook until fat begins to separate. Then add almonds and raisins, and the saffron dissolved in lime juice. May be eaten hot or cold.*

### Durga Puja: South India (Navarathi)

**Doodh Payasam**
1 level dessertspoon broken rice (kani)* - wash
4 cups milk;
4 pods cardamom - skin and crush lightly
1 rounded T sugar

*Drop broken rice into milk and boil over a low flame, stirring often until rice gets cooked and milk thickens to 1-1/2 cups. Stir in cardamom and sugar and remove from flame. Serve hot or chilled. * Or similarly with 1 dessertspoon semia or vermicelli. These are not washed, but are fried with a teaspoon of ghee to a light brown.*

### Caribbean

**Lupsee (Durga Puja) - 6-8 servings**
[served with puris]
8 ozs/225 grms white flour
1/2 pt/300 mls evaporated milk
8 ozs/225 grms granulated sugar
2 ozs/50 grms ghee
2 ozs./50 grms raisins
1 pt/600 mls water

*Sift flour and parch for about 5 minutes on slow heat. Allow to cool and sift again. Heat ghee in an iron pot. Meanwhile, mix flour with the rest of the ingredients, adding dry ingredients first and then liquid. Add mixture to pot and lower heat. Cook until liquid has been absorbed.*

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## Glossary

*(reprinted from **The Best of India A Cookbook**)*

*Asafetida (hing):* This is a strong-tasting spice, with a pronounced garlic flavor. It is used in small quantities to aid digestion and prevent flatulence - particularly when lentils and other beans are served.

*Basmati rice:* This fragrant, and long-grained rice, grown in India and Pakistan, is the preferred rice for Indian cooking.

*Cardamom (elaichi):* Essential to Indian cooking, this spice is available whole green pods (choti elaichi), black pods (badi elaichi), and ground.

Green cardamon is known as one of the "warm spices." It has a pungent, highly aromatic, eucalyptus like flavor. Green cardamom is often chewed after meals to aid digestion. Black cardamom cannot be eaten raw. When whole are cracked pods are used in Indian recipes, they are not intended to be eaten. Be sure to use pods when called for; ground cardamon is not a good substitute in such recipes.

*Chick pea flour:* Besan or gram flour is a fine, pale-yellow flour made from ground chick peas (garbanzos). This is used for making pakoras and other fried snacks and savories.

*Chili pepper*: The hot green chili peppers used in so much Indian cooking are the pods of the plant Capsicum. The widely available bright green jalapeno and serrano peppers range from hot to very hot and are a good choice for most Indian recipes. Choose fresh green peppers 1"-2" in length with no soft or brown spots. Handle carefully, as the heat resides in the seeds and the oil they give off is an irritant that can remain on your hands.

*Chokna:* This is the seasoning of food, the last act in the cycle of cooking a meal in a Hindu house. It is supposed to have a cleansing effect, driving away the evil forces and making room for the devatas(deities) to come and have food.

*Cumin (jeera):* This aromatic, pungent spice is widely used both as whole seeds or ground. A relative of caraway, whole cumin is available in two varieties: black or white. Most ready ground is from the white seed, which is much less expensive than the black. Black cumin is treasured for its intense and complex flavor. To bring out the flavor of this spice, dry-roast or fry in very hot oil.

*Dal (dhal):* The general term in India for all types of dried beans, peas, and lentils, which are available whole or split. A valuable source of protein, especially for vegetarians, dal is easy to cook - especially in a pressure cooker - and easy to digest, given the addition of asafetida.

*Fenugreek (methi):* Available fresh in summer, fenugreek leaves are used in meat dishes, potatoes, and in breads. Dried fenugreek has a very pungent, bitter taste and should be used sparingly.

*Garam Masala:* An essential spice mixture in Indian cooking; its name means "warm spices." This is an aromatic mix that is sprinkled on just as a dish is finished. It is sold commercially or can be made at home. Grind together in a spice mill or mortar with pestle: 1T black peppercorns, 2 tsp cumin seeds, one 1" piece of cinnamon stick, 10 green cardamom pods, 1 tsp cloves, and 3 bay leaves. Store in an airtight container. Makes about 3 tablespoons.

*Ghee:* Fresh unsalted butter, melted in an uncovered pan and simmered over low heat to eliminate all moisture. This will usually take 30 - 45 minutes. During the boiling, white foam will form on the top. Skim off this foam several times. When the gurgling decreases or just before the ghee becomes silent, add a tsp of cumin seed for every 2 cups of melted butter. Ghee prepared this way will remain aromatic and wholesome for three to four weeks. Unlike ordinary butter, it can be used for frying at a very high heat.

It is sold in cans as pure butter ghee or, less expensively, as ghee-with-vegetable oil. Ghee can seem rather heavy and rich, so it is best to add very small amounts to food just before serving to produce a distinctive flavor. Once opened, it will keep in the refrigerator in a well-sealed container for up to six months.

*Jaggery:* An unrefined sugar with a unique musky flavor, jaggery is made from the juice of sugar-cane stalks. It is usually packaged in large lumps. Dark brown sugar can be used as a substitute.

*Kalonji:*These small jet-black seeds, also called nigella, or black onion seeds, have a distinctive peppery taste. Use in dals, vegetable dishes, pickles, and stuffed breads.

*Karahi*: Thick bottomed frying pans.

*Mango, dried (amchoor)*: A spice powder made from sun-dried unripe mangoes, this adds sourness to a dish in the same way tamarind, pomegranate seeds, and lemon juice do.

*Mustard seeds, whole black (rai)*: These small brownish-black spicy seeds are especially popular in the cooking of eastern and souther India. They are often used in fish dishes and as a flavoring for chutneys. Fried whole in hot oil as the first step of a recipe, they impart a sweet and earthy flavor. If ground, the flavor is pungent and bitter.

*Pomegranate seeds (anardana)*: The sun-dried kernels of the wild pomegranate are used to add a tang and crunch to vegetables, meat dishes, and dals, especially in the cooking of northwestern India. Mango powder sometimes can be substituted for flavor, but nothing can substitute for the texture the seeds add to a dish.

*Phulka*: a thin wheat roti preferred by northern Indian urbanites.

*Saffron (zaffraan)*: The most expensive spice in the world is made from the dried stamens of crocuses. Highly aromatic, it also lends a delicate yellow color to rice dishes. Don't use too much saffron, or it will add a bitter taste.

*Tamarind (imli)*: These large bean pods have a distinctive sour taste. They are seeded and pressed into semidried pulp, from which the juice is extracted. The juice adds a sweet-and-sour flavor to certain dishes, most often fish and seafood. Tamarind rice is a Sri Vaisnava dish.

Tamarind is available in pulp form, which must be soaked and strained, or as tamarind concentrate, which needs no soaking. Soaked and strained pulp will not keep for long, so make it up as you need it. Tamarind concentrate, once opened, keeps refrigerated up to 3 months.

*Tava*: The Indian version of a cast-iron griddle used to cook chapatis.

*Turmeric (haldi)*: Usually sold ground, turmeric comes from the dried rhizome of a plant in the ginger family. A strong yellow spice, it is used sparingly in many dishes to add color and flavor. Tumeric signifies auspiciousness; its absence indicates inauspiciousness.